

Letters To My Grandchildren

by

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(1823 – 1911)

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Letter One

Riccarton, 16th December, 1885.

My dear Grandchildren, -

This is the thirty-fifth anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrim Settlers in Canterbury, on 16th December, 1850. On some future anniversary you will want to know the meaning of it, and that is what I want to explain to you, as well as I can.

We have spent a month very happily together while your papa has been away at Dunedin Show, and shearing his sheep at Broompark, and mamma has been in Wellington visiting her mother (your Grandmamma Park), and recruiting her health after the fatigues of the Volunteer Bazaar which she assisted at, and this is intended as your reward for being good and kind and attentive to me during that month. When you grow older you will hear all about the Pilgrim Settlers, otherwise what I want to tell you is about the place they came to, a desert wilderness.

When you are on the hills now, you see a great plain all around you, with trees and houses and gardens and fields, all looking so beautiful. Then it was all one vast open plain, without a road or fence or house or garden or tree, except the two Native Bushes at Riccarton (50 acres) and Papanui (200 acres), and away in the far distance Kaiapoi and Rangiora Bushes. The three old houses at Riccarton built by your grand-uncle and grandfather, William and John Deans, in 1843 (all still standing), the garden and a field or two at Riccarton, and a few buildings in Christchurch to receive the Pilgrims, were the only signs of civilisation on the Pilgrims' arrival. There were no bridges over the rivers except

at Riccarton and one in Christchurch, and the rivers were dangerous to ford. The plains were covered with tussock grass and fern on dry ground, and flax, and raupo in wet and boggy places. In the "Country Journal", vol. vi., November number of 1882, you will find an account of what had been done by your great-uncle and grandfather before the Pilgrims arrived to change the dreary aspect of the plains, reclaiming the waste and unprofitable wilderness and transforming it into productive fields and gardens, and now it is the most productive country in the world. But all this you will learn from other sources, so I will tell you how we lived and worked. This will be nearly all personal, as some day you may want to know about grandma, living alone without grandpapa, and of course I know more of my own self than anyone else.

Well, your grandfather and I sailed from Plymouth, in England, on 12th October, 1852, in the "Minerva" (Captain Johnston). We arrived at Lyttelton on the 2nd February, 1853, a long voyage. We left the ship next day, and came over the hill by the bridge path, now disused. I was a bad sailor, and was so weak I had to be left at the Rev. Mr Puckle's at the Parsonage, near Casterton. (This was two years after the Pilgrim Settlers had arrived, and nearly ten after your great-uncle, for your grandfather came a few months after him). Mr and Mrs Puckle received me very kindly, and I remained with them till next day.

Your grandfather came right home to Riccarton that night with the gentlemen who had escorted us over the hill (Dr. Barker, Mr Cass, and one or two others), and returned for me next day, but had to go back to the ship to get our luggage cleared, and we had a goodly lot of it. Besides wearing apparel and furniture, we had the old dogcart, threshing mill,

and the water-wheel belonging to it. The ship had to remain away out in the harbour, as there were no wharves to lie alongside in those days, and everybody and everything was landed in small boats when the wind was favourable. That day your grandfather could not land till the wind lulled in the evening, so I had to come home without him in the spring cart, lent by Mr and Mrs Watts Russell, of Ilam, and Miss Kate Williams (Mrs Innes) came with the driver (George Dalton) to accompany me home, in case your grandfather should not be able to leave the ship in time to drive home with daylight. He rode his favourite horse, "Nimrod", and "Old Darling", the progenitor of all the draught horses here and on Homebush, brought me home. The road round the foot of the hills, and from there to Christchurch, was little better than a track with large holes here and large boulder stones there, in the middle of the road. I ought not to have omitted to say that when the ship anchored off Lyttelton, Mrs Crompton, of the Mitre Hotel, sent me some fresh butter on board, which was most acceptable, as the butter on board I had not tasted for months, nor the tea from the first evening I went on board. We had a great many of the great people, promoters of the Canterbury Pilgrim Settlement, on board - Gibbon Wakefield, Mr and Mrs Sewell, Rev. J. Raven, etc., etc. When we landed we had lunch at the Mitre Hotel. There would be fully a dozen houses in port then, and about the same in Christchurch. I was mounted on a white horse with one eye, which was led by one of the greatest rogues in the place, but I did not know that, and he brought me safely to the foot of the hill, your grandfather and the other gentlemen around me, for I could only "stick on" a horse. While at lunch before starting, I was delighted by an old friend of my

father's coming to call on me, asking so kindly for him and many of my old friends. It was a pleasant surprise, as I thought I was coming to a land where no one would know me. The gentleman was the late David Laurie, who continued friendly till his early and sudden death. Well, when there was no sign of your grandfather coming over the hill in time to drive home with daylight, we started in hopes of his overtaking us by the way, as horsemen could come much quicker than we. At the Heathcote River, a little above where the bridge is now, we had to cross in a punt. That is something like a flat-bottomed boat with sides, in which horses and carriages could be conveyed across rivers. (I had an adventure on this one once, of which I will tell you after). They were drawn with ropes from side to side. The Ferry Road was not much more than wide enough for one carriage at a time, with deep ditches on both sides. From about the quay to Christchurch was one large flax swamp, so soft and boggy that it would not carry the weight of a sheep or cow till those ditches or drains had carried off a great quantity of the water, when the land began to get solid, and cattle were turned on to tread it down. Then people made more ditches and began to cultivate it. It was a great place for shooting wild ducks before the Settlers arrived. So many lagoons made it quite the home of the waterfowl. Of course, on my way home I was shown Christchurch, or where it was to be. I think we passed about half a dozen houses in it, and a few on the road. There were culverts across the creeks in the park, and over the gully beyond the railway. The road (from the hotel which was built, and the house through the railway gates also) was very similar to the Ferry Road, the fields on both sides being then almost impassable swamps, covered with tall flax.

The hedge was planted on the boundary from the east corner at the river along the road to the entrance to the lane and up the eastern side of it. The two fields between that and the Bush were then open, unfenced ground, covered with the dead stumps of half of the bush that was cut down for the use of the Settlers according to the agreement made with Mr (now Sir) Wm. Fox when your great-uncle and grandfather arranged with him about the exchange of their Wellington, Nelson and Manawatu land orders for the 400 acres at Riccarton. There was a dry ridge between the swamp on the east side, and the bush on the west, which was turned to account as a track to reach what is now the great Riccarton, South and West Coast Road. Previously the route lay down the river bank, and the bank of the creek (or overflow from the river) above Woods's mill dam, round by Washboun's, till a culvert was put across the creek near Woods's house.

We reached home in safety quite an hour before the horsemen arrived - Your grandfather, my cousin (Douglas Graham), and Willie Rankin (who came out with us), and Mr Cass (who had assisted Mrs Williams, now Mrs Cass) to manage the farm and station (Homebush) during your grandfather's year or thirteen months' absence from home for me, and to see his aged father (who outlived him two years). Mrs Williams received me kindly, and as Mr Cass was building a house for her, which was not quite finished, we asked her to stay till it was made comfortable for her. Her husband, Mr Williams, who was left in charge, died two months after your grandfather left for me. The old house looked dark to me. I have often thought of it since as a presentiment of my future life in its loneliness till your dear father grew up to cheer and brighten my

clouded days, so like the dark nor'-west cloud that had overspread the sky by the time I reached home, such a cloud as you may often see still, with the small, clear opening to the nor'-west, the silver lining to the dark cloud below, showing the brightness above, where God stands "behind the shadows keeping watch above His own".

Next morning, at 7, I had a glass of new milk, warm from the cow, before I got up, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I was very weak and useless, and preferred being the guest of, rather than the hostess to, Mrs Williams, during the week she had consented to stay with us. After breakfast we went to see the garden, which was in most beautiful order. Fruit trees were laden with fruit, but my favourites, the gooseberries, that I had longed for on the voyage, were gone a week before our arrival. How I did wish they had saved a bush for us when they knew we were expected so soon. The plums were our first ripe fruit, and I did enjoy them. I could only walk with the assistance of your grandfather, and only as far as the island. There was no house there then, only nice green lucerne, newly cut, and pretty. A nice four or five-wire fence, painted white, from where the holly fence begins up to the hedge at the cottage, to keep horses and cattle out of the garden, for this was the way they were all driven backwards and forwards. The two fields at the farm were all in one, and thickly studded with black burnt stumps of trees where a fire had gone through. There were a few in the field in front also, which had just been ploughed a first time; and very rough it was. It was necessary to plough all the land here and leave it for a year before taking a crop off it. It was sown either with flax or fern, which required that time to decompose. On my first walk out we met a cow coming in with her

first calf, which your grandfather named "Jeanie", and gave it to me. On my first visit to Homebush that calf was brought in with her first calf. She was sold for beef in 1867, for £18, to go to the West Coast when the gold-digging broke out there, and prices were high for food.

Mr Hewlings, lately Chief Surveyor (who had arrived in 1849 as one of the survey staff, and who was a faithful friend of Your grandfather's, and of all the family), was with us on our first walk, having been the first to call on me on my arrival. I had innumerable callers on account of the kindness and hospitality shown to the Pilgrim Settlers by your grandfather and uncle, who literally kept open house. You will often bear of the arrival of the first four ships with the Pilgrims on 16th December, 1850. It was a great day in Canterbury, and Riccarton being the only settled place, the newcomers flocked to it in troops, sometimes as many as fifty and a hundred a day. Of course, they were all tired and hungry after their walk over the hill from port. All required to be fed, and some lodged for the night. This was no easy matter, with only Mrs Todd (good woman) to cook and make bread for all. Sometimes as many as four sheep a day were required, but all were welcomed. Fortunately they were not particular as to their comforts for the night. Beds were luxuries, and a blanket on the bare floor was a comfort in those days. Sometimes a dozen would be stretched on the floor in the sitting-room of the old house. The bedrooms also full, and the watercolour picture by Reworth, "My First Night in New Zealand. Deans' Bush, 17th December, 1850 shows a camp in the Bush after the house was full. But the chief interest connected with the Anniversary to our family was

the proof of the correctness of your great-uncle and grandfather's convictions that this place would eventually become the site of a large and prosperous settlement, which every succeeding year tends still further to make manifest to one and all. (I don't include discontented persons). Poor Mrs Todd could not continue long her arduous labours with her young family to attend to, and her husband had his own duties, so she was obliged to ask to be allowed to give the flour and meat and let the newcomers cook for themselves. Sometimes they had even to kill the sheep as well, for all hands were busy on the farm, and the company was irregular in its visits, and meat did not keep well in summer, although in their primitive "safe" – they sometimes kept it a whole fortnight. This was a large cask sunk in the river under the bridge, where they hung the fresh meat inside with a lid over it, and in the shade of the bridge. The coolness of the water, always the same temperature, kept the meat beautifully sweet. I am afraid I was sometimes very rude and ungracious to my visitors. I had been sick all the voyage of four months, and consequently weak and irritable. There were only two or three chairs to sit on, home-made deal ones (the old armchair in the kitchen being the best, made of black pine by your grandfather). Had I been strong and well, I would have been proud of them, as I am now, but my visitors being all strangers to me, and no comforts to offer them after their long walks (which were undertaken in kindness), I often felt I could have wished them to be more considerate of my weakness, and allow me to rest, which I freely admit I sometimes did by the banks of the river, when I saw visitors coming, and gave them a reasonable time to rest and leave before I ventured in. When Mrs Williams (now Mrs Cass)

left, she kindly left me her easy chair till our own should arrive from the ship. In those days it was no easy matter getting luggage from port. It had nearly all to come round by Sumner in boats, and up the Heathcote to the Christchurch Quay, from thence in drays to its destination. Many people lost heavily, nearly their all, in crossing the bar. We were fortunate, then, in getting everything safely home, and within two months of our arrival. Of course, the unpacking of all the cases and boxes (about fifty, so far as I remember) kept your grandfather busy for some time, for we brought every requisite for a house except kitchen utensils. These could be got here pretty good then. The harvest work was just in the middle when we arrived, and between it and the unpacking of the furniture and machinery your grandfather was often very, very tired. On the way home for me via Valparaiso, Panama, New York, and Liverpool, he caught a severe cold, which he never was able to throw off, and by this time it had fairly got hold of, and settled on, his lungs, and what with the heat, the work, and the racking cough, instead of improving, as he expected on his arrival (as I did), every month showed further signs of weakness, though to the last he kept a brave heart, and never grumbled or complained of pain, though it was only too evident he was suffering acutely at times. We had only been a fortnight here, when one morning, looking out of the window, I caught a glance of him standing in pain, that told me unmistakably that he could never recover. I tried for about a year to banish the thought, but at times it would assert itself, though by the doctor's orders I tried to bide my suspicions, as the length of his days depended so much on my bearing cheerfully, or appearing to do so, the terrible thought that the desire of my eyes

was withering like grass before them, and that nothing known to medical skill could arrest the quick march of the disease. From the lungs it went to the intestines, and then became incurable. May none of you, my dear little ones, ever know the agony of watching the approach of the black cloud that was then overshadowing all my life. Living in the small house, which was then as comfortable as it could be made, the porch having been put in front of the door which originally opened on to the verandah, still Nature would at times overpower me when I looked at him, and then I would rush out (with your father then a baby in arms) to the kitchen, where Mrs Wraight (now near Dunsandel) was housekeeper, and whenever she saw me coming in that way she so kindly, without a word, would open her bedroom door for me to relieve burdened heart and compose myself before returning to the house, for till the last few days I tried my best not to add to his pain by seeing my grief, which I could no longer disguise. A consultation of Dr. Barker (his regular attendant) and Dr. Earle was held in October, with no favourable result, though occasionally he would rally for a week or so, and then fall back as much. Dr. Barker told me the result of the consultation was that at home in the Old Country he could not live more than six months, but with the better climate here he might, with care, be, spared a little longer. My heart rebelled against their verdict. I could not believe he would be taken from me so soon, though I saw it only too plainly with my own eyes. Fortunately, your father was a very good baby, and was almost the only source of pleasure and amusement your grandfather cared for, though he was never strong enough to hold him more than about five minutes at a time. I had no nurse for him,

so he was constantly with us, either sitting on my knees alongside his father or lying on the sofa beside him, where he would play with him long time while I was busy with household duties. For nearly three months before his death his walks only extended to the garden or bush, seldom without suffering for it. If fine, he sometimes took a drive, but not often. I think the exertion was too great, and he suffered more than from a gentle walk. I used to watch his return and meet him with your father in my arms.

I have digressed a long way from what I first intended, but this is as much an Ebenezer to God's glory and providential care over those who put their trust in Him, as information to you about the manners and customs of the early days in New Zealand. I must go back, and tell you that the furniture belonging to the house was the armchair already mentioned, and two or three plain ones of black pine still in the kitchen at the farm, a stretcher with feather mattress, and a double bedstead with feather mattress (now in the day nursery), and a small table with drawer, still used as a toilet table in my room. The cooking utensils in the kitchen were quite as scanty. My curiosity was excited to see how a joint could be roasted at an open fireplace. The fires were all on hearths then; no manner of grates or stoves. The old flat camp ovens explained the mystery, and many a good leg of mutton was cooked in them, as well as many a good loaf of bread baked. We used to burn the waste wood from the bush; that was, the top branches, sometimes very green, and often wet, and it was no fun getting breakfast ready with such fuel. When dry, it made splendid fires, both hot and quick, and burned very rapidly. The roots always made better fires than the branches. When green and wet, the only way was to stand it on

end round the open fireplace in wet weather, or outside in dry weather. The chopping of the firewood was a consideration if the logs were thick; it took up so much time at busy seasons. There was a brick oven in the kitchen which held the week's bread at a time. By the week-end it was often staler than would be pleasant to eat now, but not so bad as baker's bread would have been, and there was no choice. The wheat was very smutty that year (1853-54), consequently the bread was both black and bitter in taste, but I never heard of anyone being the worse for eating it. It may have been a tonic. The potatoes and meat (beef, mutton and pork) were good, with a fowl occasionally. The sugar and tea were horrible. I had taken a dislike to tea on board ship, and it was months before I could look at it, but good Mrs Wraight always kept me well supplied with new milk, warm from the cow, night and morning, and, with plenty of fresh eggs, I soon got fat and rosy, so much so that when the captain of our ship, the "Minerva", came to visit us a fortnight after our arrival, he said I had improved so much he would have passed me in the street. I wish he could have said the same of your grandfather. God had ordered it otherwise, and we had to submit. He knows what is best for us; He ruleth in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay His hand from working, or say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" But it was a hard task we had to learn to say, "Thy will be done". To me it has always been the hardest of all the petitions in the Lord's Prayer. This is on account of my strong, wayward will, and rebellious nature, which has been such a labour for me to conquer and subdue. It is the first lesson that ought to be given to each boy and girl - know thyself, conquer thyself - with God's help you can.

Our furniture, crockery, glass, etc., had all been well packed, and came pretty safely. Only some of the carpeting spoiled a little with salt water, and some wallpaper. The harvest was got in well, considering the wet season, and the sawyers were busy in the bush sawing the timber to build the barn and make the dam for the machine we brought with us to thresh the grain. The carpenters (Messrs James Johnston & Co.) soon put up the building and mill, but the dam was a more serious undertaking than they had calculated upon. Three times it was finished at night and ready to use next day, when lo! it had burst either the work, or round the ends of the dam. They had to construct it on a totally different system. The old trees in the bottom were a great trouble to clear out for a proper foundation. The under-current was much stronger than supposed, and the banks were a great deal weaker. It was near the end of spring before it was successfully finished. It gave your grandfather a great deal of anxiety and trouble, as well as other annoyances, which he ought to have been kept free from. A few weeks after our arrival he had a fly blister on his chest to try to remove the cough which was so harassing. It was too deep-seated, and of too long-standing, to give way, and instead of doing good it only weakened the system. He seldom complained of pain, though evidently suffering very acutely at times. My cousin, the late Douglas Graham, and a young friend of your grandfather's, Wm. Rankin, came out with us and stayed with us. Douglas was of great service looking after the workmen on the farm. Rankin was sent to Homebush to learn stock-keeping, and to look after the old stockman, Robinson Clough, whose diary may amuse you some

day. He was a noted character, being at the hoisting of the British flag at Akaroa.

The garden was famed for fruit and vegetables, with which it was well stocked. Being only a paling fence around it, with a young quick fence inside, it was not easy to look after the fruit. Troops of people used to come from town and elsewhere, ostensibly to see the bush, principally on Sundays, and, of course, this having been a bachelor's establishment before I came, everyone got as much as they could carry away. It was not a pleasant duty to give them to understand it was private property, and that they could not help themselves to what they chose. The small fruits were over before we arrived, but the plums and peaches, apples and pears, were coming forward, and, of course, I made jam of whatever I could get. The jam was appreciated, though I had to borrow a large enamelled pot from Mrs Cass to make it in. Of course she had fruit in return for its use.

Your grandfather and I were both Presbyterians, but the Pilgrim Settlers were all intended to be Church of England, though there were several exceptions. During your grandfather's absence when he came home to Scotland for me, a service had been established once a fortnight in the old house for the people in this neighbourhood. We were asked if we would allow it to continue, which we consented to do for a few months till they could find another place, as we expected your father to come a little baby to us, so it would not be convenient after that. The Rev. Mr Puckle, in whose house I stayed the first night in New Zealand, conducted the services, coming to the Cass's (who then lived at Hagley Lodge) on the Saturday night. We had to hurry over breakfast, get the room arranged with a white cloth on the table, and if there were baptisms (as there frequently were)

a basin with water for the ceremony, and a towel. Forms and planks were carried in for seats. I took charge of the white surplice, and one of the bedrooms was required as a vestry. Once when it was washed, wet weather set in, and after being on the hedge for a fortnight, had to be hastily dried at the fire and ironed on Saturday for use on Sunday. The baptismal water after the service was carefully poured out on the ground by Mr Puckle lest it should be used for any other purpose. These Sunday gatherings were not, as a rule, enjoyable to me, having the trouble of the preparations, and were frequent sources of annoyance to your grandfather, knowing that some of the worshippers had previously been helping themselves to fruit in the garden, and had hidden it till after the service was over. Our own quiet Sabbath service we enjoyed exceedingly. We were of one mind and spirit in our reverence and devotion to our Maker and our Saviour, and our Sabbath services were the sincere homage of our hearts. We had the same quiet private service in our cabin in the ship, and I often look back to these as the most devout periods of my life. Neither of us liked the formalities of the English service, though we both liked Mr Puckle as a friend and minister. He was a good man, and not so very High Church as some of his brethren.

About a fortnight before your father came as a little baby I had to give Mr Puckle notice that it would be inconvenient having the services continued in the house, but hoped they would find another suitable place for next service day. Weeks and months went past, and still no word of another house being thrown open to the good man. When I enquired why it was so, I was told there was not another "empty" house. We did not like that speech, and then began

to suspect that the service had been commenced here during your grandfather's absence with a view to securing us as members on our return. We would have continued to attend Mr Puckle's services while your grandfather was able to do so had a place been secured within walking distance, the roads not being fit to drive on, and I could not ride. However, after hearing that speech, and taking the suspicion into our heads that we were meant to be entrapped, we would not go to any of the churches. Three months after a Presbyterian minister (the Rev. Mr Moir, of Wellington) was passing on the way to Wellington, and spent a few days in Christchurch and Lyttelton. He preached in Mr Johnston's carpenter's shop in Cashel Street, and baptised your father and some other children of Scotch parents. Your grandfather was very frail, and during the ceremony I stood with him ready to catch your father lest he should have dropped him. That was on the last Sunday of October, 1853. In the following January there was a meeting of Scotsmen held in Christchurch with a view to taking steps to send for a Presbyterian minister, as the Scotch residents (of whom there was now a goodly number) preferred the simple forms of worship to which they had been accustomed and loved. Your grandfather was too frail to attend, but wrote a letter concurring in the movement, and offering £100 towards building a church. The late Mr W. K. Macdonald, of Orari, was in the chair, and a committee was formed to visit or communicate with the various families in order to get information as to the amount of support they would willingly give. It was not till August, 1854, that a petition was sent home for a minister, and as my sister Mary was to marry a young minister (the Rev. John Hunter), through sympathy with me in my loneliness (two

months after your grandfather's death), an invitation was sent to him first, but on account of his declining to accept, the Convener of the Colonial Committee of the Free Churches had to look round for another. In April, 1856, the Rev. Charles and Mrs Fraser arrived, and were heartily received by the people. His first sermon (preached in the old Wesleyan Chapel, kindly lent by the Rev. Mr Aldred and his congregation till the St. Andrew's Scotch Church was opened in January, 1857) was from the text in Timothy: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" That text he preached from every year on the anniversary of his first preaching to us, applying it as a test of how we had heard and practised the teaching. In 1881 he was overshadowed with a dark cloud, the folds of which still surround him, but I think most of his old people still hope that he may yet come forth from it purified in the furnace of deep degradation, and, by the Spirit of God working in him, to will and do his good pleasure, he may yet be an honoured instrument in turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to serve the living God. He was a very clever, talented man, polished and gentlemanly in manner, though a muddler in business. He was connected with almost every institution in Christchurch for the benefit of the community, whether educational or charitable. He was highly educated, and most liberal in his views on politics. The clergymen of other denominations were all well received by him, and there were few of those of our own denomination who had not enjoyed the hospitality of his house on their arrival here. His name will be handed down in connection with many

good works, which makes me loath to think he will always be a castaway.

At the beginning of this long letter I should have mentioned that there was a nice cheese waiting me, a present from an old friend of your grandfather's, Mr Caverhill, then of Motunau Station, now in the North Island. He has continued, with his wife and family, among my best friends all along. Many, many were the kind acts he did for me, both before and after your grandfather's death. When down country he usually spent a night or two with us, and never left without volunteering some service for me. He was fond of, and a good judge of, animals of all descriptions, and very kindly looked for and bought your grandfather, two new bulls for the station (Homebush), and a beautiful pony which he named "Jeanie" after me, for your grandfather to ride, as the doctors had suggested exercise on horseback for him, and the horses belonging to the establishment were all too high for him to mount in his frail state. Unfortunately, it was too late in being thought of, for I can only remember two rides, from the second of which he had to be brought home, having burst a blood vessel, which again weakened him more than ever. The pony was kept, and became the mother of two nice ponies that your father rode in his school and office days - "Dinah" and "Jeanie 2nd".

His first pony was "Jessie", imported by Mr Wilkin from Sydney. The day after my arrival another cheese was presented me by another old friend, Mrs Gebbie, of Greensland, Head of Bay. It was carried over the hill by Andrew Dawson, now, or lately, of Prebbleton, and no small undertaking in those days. Both cheeses were good, and duly appreciated. It was some time before I got reconciled to the manner of housekeeping here. The kitchen, being detached

from the house, was more under the control of the married couple. The wife, Mrs Wraight, was a good cook and laundress, as well as housekeeper. In fine weather I went out to her, and on wet days she came to me to arrange about dinner and other etceteras. In the delicate state of both your grandfather's and my own health, it was most fortunate we had such a couple to depend upon. Though I had been a good walker before coming here, the voyage so deprived me of strength that a walk as far as the island was as much as I was able for, neither could I stand the jolting of driving, the roads being very rough, tracks cut here and there where the ground was wet and swampy with deep ditches on either side, and where the ground was pretty dry tracks made with the wheelruts of bullock drays and horse carts.

The autumn and winter of 1853 had been very wet, so there was not much inducement to go out, but the weather began to improve in July, and by the beginning of October the ground had got quite dry. Your father was two months old, and I had got pretty strong again, only your grandfather, instead of improving with the fine weather, seemed to get weaker. I was anxious to see him try every means of restoration, and as I had been eight months here without being off the ground (except once, when I walked to Hagley Lodge, and found it too much for me), I coaxed your grandfather into taking a drive every mild day. He was fond of gardening, and worked in it beyond his strength, so I was glad to get a little respite from that for him. Our first drive (with your father always on my knee wherever we went) was as far as Papanui. We had to go round by Christchurch to cross the river by the old bridge where the Victoria Bridge now stands. We drove down the riverbank and through where Woods's mill

and house now stand, it being a better track than the road. I did not like holding the horse so near the riverbank while your grandfather opened the gates, but he told me the horse, old "Prince", was as frightened of the river as I could possibly be. He was a horse of your great-uncle's, William Deans, a beautiful model of a carriage horse, and a great favourite. I think our second drive was up the Riccarton Road, as far as the deep gully at Broomfield. On our return we saw a vehicle of some kind meeting us a little way above Mr Shand's. It became a question of passing, being a Whitechapel cart, with a lady and gentleman. There was but room for one on the roadway. At that place the ditch was not so deep, and it was wider, so with a little caution we got into the ditch till the others passed on. "Prince" was a dark roan, and known all over the country for usefulness. In this way on our drives we managed to return a few of the calls paid us on our first arrival, but only a few, for many places could only be reached on foot or horseback, and I could neither ride nor walk any distance, and by midsummer I dared not think of anything but a short drive in mild days. It was then thought that riding would be better for your grandfather, and Mr Caverhill bought the chestnut pony, "Jeanie", for him. The season was dry and hot, with occasional cold winds. The harvest was secured in good order, and the threshing mill was found to be a wonderful improvement on the old-fashioned flails. The men had worked well during harvest, and a great feast of good things was prepared for them in the old barn as a "harvest home". Tables were laid the length of the building, which were loaded with all sorts of nice eatables, which had justice done them. About 9 o'clock, when your father (about eleven months old)

had gone to sleep, my young housemaid, Ellen Nelson, watched by him while your grandfather and I joined the merrymakers for an hour. We heard some songs from them, drank their healths in good whisky toddy, wished them a pleasant evening and retired. The tables, which were planks of wood on trestles, were soon removed, and they danced till daylight to the strains of a violin which someone played. Of course, wives and daughters were of the number present. One hot day, just after dinner, while the grain was being carried from the field in front, your grandfather went out for his usual stroll, but soon returned to call all hands to assist in extinguishing a fire just starting at the edge of the Bush. The Maoris had their huts about where the onions grow now, and had gone off after dinner without having properly extinguished their fires, which were now spreading through the grass, and would soon have been beyond the power of man to stop. However, with plenty of willing hands, and being close to the river, it was soon got under, but not a minute too soon, as the wind began to rise, and some of the trees on the very edge were slightly scorched. The Maoris were sent to the island to make their huts for the rest of the harvest and the potato digging. Many years after they wanted to claim the island as having then been given to them as a gift.

At the end of March we had the great pleasure of a visit from Mr and Mrs Lyon, of Wellington (Aunt Grace's father and mother). Mr Lyon had a great deal of business in this place, being trustee in several estates. They were a great comfort to us, being more of our own style of people than any we knew here. They left us with great regret on both sides at the beginning of May. But it was the beginning of a friendship that never flagged while they lived. (Mr

Lyon was co-trustee with me for twenty years, and we never had a dispute). We took a few short drives during their stay, but the jolting was too severe on grandfather. Besides the bush fire, there were two other mishaps befell us that spring and summer. I mentioned that the groceries in Christchurch were very bad. They were also dear, so your grandfather sent to Sydney for a year's supply of every necessary. The shipment arrived at Lyttelton all right (I think in October, 1853). All heavy goods had to be conveyed in boats round by Sumner and up the Heathcote to the quay. That boatload struck on a snag (tree root) in the river, and capsized. The contents were all discharged in the river, but nearly all recovered from it. The water being brackish as the tide flows up, of course the sugar and salt were quite useless. The rice and sago, being in bags, were washed with fresh water, but found only fit for the pigs. The tea (of which there were three chests) escaped best, being tin-lined inside the boxes. However, some of it was slightly damp and damaged, but with careful unpacking we managed to save more than half, which I spread in the sun for several days on nice new blankets which I had just made. They were woven in the narrow loom, and the making of these fifteen pairs of blankets was my first employment here. They were woven in Kilmarnock, and put up in rolls to pack easier. Some of them are still in use. They are blue bordered, with the seam up the middle. Two pairs my father gave me, made from his own sheep's wool, were ready for use at once when they arrived. Great care had to be taken with blankets and flannels to prevent them getting fly-blown if out after sunset. A hot iron was the only way to destroy the maggots, which were always blown alive. The other mishap I referred to was the

loss of a large potful of black currant jam. The doctors recommended it for your grandfather's cough and chest, so we watched the fruit carefully till it ripened, gathered and made it, but it being late before it was quite finished, and I being required in the house, Mrs Wraight said she would dish it for me, so I left it. Next morning, to my mortification, she told me the lamp had fallen off the table into the pot, mixing the jam with the whale oil. Every jar was covered with the shiny blue, green and yellow oil. Fortunately, there were plenty more black currants nearly ripe, but the accident was a terrible disappointment to us both, for your grandfather and I had gathered and prepared them all ourselves. I took care of the next lot. Mr Gould had imported better groceries, so that I was able to get sugar for jam-making.

When Mr and Mrs Lyon left us, your grandfather at once began to talk with me about his departure from this world, leaving your father and me behind him. I saw plainly enough with my eyes that it was coming, but my heart rebelled against the thought that it was possible he would leave us. However, he reasoned with me that it was useless trying to deceive myself any longer, and that we must both prepare for the dread event. He had been arranging his affairs for months previous without exciting any suspicions, but now he had to arrange for your father and myself, whether we remained here or returned to my friends in Scotland. He gave me my choice, so that he might alter his will accordingly. He was afraid I might regret having come here with him away from all my friends. That I never did. We were all in all to each other. All my regret was that I could do so little to relieve his sufferings, which were very acute at times, though he never murmured nor complained.

We often sat for hours together, clasping each other's hands, your father on my knee or playing on the floor at our feet. Your grandfather was not allowed to talk much, for fear of exciting the cough or the pain. With the one trying to support the other, we could at intervals talk over worldly arrangements, but always looking forward to the meeting again in that better world where there are no sorrows nor partings. He placed all his trust on the merits of our Redeemer's death and resurrection, and looked calmly forward. On Sundays his favourite texts were such as these: The heart knoweth its own bitterness"; "My times are in Thy hands"; "Leave thy fatherless children and I will preserve them alive, saith the Lord, and let thy widows trust in Me"; etc., etc. Of course, I read to him, as he had been unable to read for several months. The Bible was the only book he opened for weeks.

At the end of May we had a visit of a few days from Mr and Mrs Hay, of Pigeon Bay, which was another pleasure to us, though a sad one, as they only came to say good-bye to him. But theirs was also a steady friendship to me during their lives. After they left, he continued to give instructions to my cousin, Douglas Graham, as to how he wished the farm improved and managed for us, and about getting timber prepared for building this house, advising him to lose no time in sending home for a wife. All these instructions he carried out most faithfully. During Mr Lyon's visit he leased his brother's farm at Burnhead to Mr Boag, and Homebush to Mr Cordy. He recommended me to ask Mr and Mrs Lyon to allow their eldest daughter Grace (Aunt Grace), then about ten or eleven, to stay with me till my brothers should arrive, which they so kindly granted, and I wrote for one or more brothers to come out, as my

father had promised to allow before we left home. The end was approaching very fast. Every day he seemed more feeble, yet such was his spirit he would not take help or support when I dreaded to see him walk across the room, which he tried to do as erectly as ever, and I would contrive to be close behind in case his limbs should fail to carry his weight. About a week before the end he consented to allow me to send for his old friend, Mrs Gebbie, to help me. She very kindly relieved me of the charge of your father, taking him outside to the fresh air, and giving him more freedom to give all my time and attention to your grandfather, as he would have no one but myself to attend on him. He always sent me out, night and morning, for a stroll and fresh air, which helped to keep me up, though I had gone off to a shadow. On the Sunday he was much worse, and I sent for the doctor (Dr. Barker). He very kindly stayed all day and night with me, and the succeeding nights till Friday, when he departed, other friends kindly volunteering to sit. This allowed me rest, if not sleep, which I had not been conscious of for a fortnight. Mrs Gebbie, Mrs Cass, Mrs Williams (widow), Mr Hewlings, and Douglas Graham all took turns. How he blessed and prayed for blessings on your father and myself, and how abundantly those prayers have been answered, for goodness and mercy have followed us ever since. On Thursday night the end seemed fast approaching, and I was afraid to lie down in case the change should come. However, by midnight I was so exhausted that I lay down on the floor beside his bed (on the sofa in the sitting-room since the Sunday), but it made him uncomfortable seeing me there, so they promised to call me if they saw a change, so I lay down beside him for the last time, and when he

laid his hand on my shoulder we were both soothed and rested. I slept till seven. After breakfast we all waited and watched. About ten he seemed to want me to move him, which I did, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, Jane, look! look!" and all was over. He seemed to see Heaven opened, and such a radiance overspread his countenance, which never left it. My heart was full, but I could not cry. The doctor came a few minutes after and ordered me to bed. Mrs Gebbie thoughtfully brought your father to me. He smiled so very sweetly on me. I resolved that I should try to live for his sake. He was then ten and a-half months old. "It surely is a blessed thing to be a good man's wife" was written by someone, and "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much" is written in the best of Books. I can endorse both, for few wives have ever been more blest than I was and the prayers for blessings on my head and your father's that were presented at God's throne of Mercy and Grace by your grandfather during his illness continue to be answered to this day, for His goodness and mercy have followed us all our days, and I trust that when He shall see fit to call us away, it will be to dwell in His house for ever. Not for any goodness in us, but for the sake of Jesus, who died for us that we might live - live to love and serve Him here, and live in the joy of His presence hereafter.

As was the height of my bliss during his (your grandfather's) lifetime, so was the depth of my sorrow and grief at losing him. Too deep for many tears, which I had to restrain, I had done all I could for him while living, and now that he was no more with me, I had to brace myself up for your father's sake, and leave the charge of the funeral rites to others. Mr Cass and some other friends chose the spot, and undertook whatever was necessary. For

those days the funeral was a very large one, as he was universally beloved, and all strove to attend and pay their last mark of esteem and affection for him. There was no hearse to convey his remains to their last resting-place in the Church of England cemetery; only the farm dray for the sad, solemn duty. He never liked pomp, so there was none, but the truly sorrowing friends attending. The resting-place is in the English cemetery. At that time I was ignorant of the exclusiveness of the English burying grounds, or rather, that other denominations were not allowed to bury there according to their own forms. When Bishop Harper arrived, and before he had consecrated the ground (we believe that wherever a Christian's body is laid, that ground is consecrated and sacred), I applied to have our family plot reserved from the formal consecration, but was answered that "if not satisfied I might move". I was not satisfied, but did not move, believing that that was the proper place for him to lie, as he had battled with the surveyors about the boundaries of the ground when they were so very uncharitable as to want to exclude the grave of an unbaptised child of Mrs Todd, and had nearly put the poor mother crazy at the thoughts of her child's grave being under the footpath of the street. They gave in at last, there having been no minister in the place to baptise the child. Another reason was, his brother James and myself had erected a stone to his memory which I might not have been allowed to remove, as I had some trouble to be allowed to erect it, having to submit the inscription for approval after getting the stone out from Aberdeen before being allowed to put it inside the ground. Another reason was, I hoped the Church of England might some day learn wisdom and become more charitable to those

who, on good and substantial grounds, have chosen to differ from them.

Letter Two

16th December, 1886.

My dear grandchildren, -

A whole year has gone past since I commenced this letter, and this is the thirty-sixth anniversary of the arrival of the "first four" ships of the Canterbury Pilgrims. Another little sister, Catherine, has been added to your number during the year. The last part of my letter was rather mournful for you, but you would not otherwise understand many things I would like to tell you if God spares me. May He, in His good providence, grant that none of you may have to come through such deep waters as I then had. May you never know what it is to be left alone (a stranger in a strange land among strangers, let them be ever so kind), with the charge of an infant to train for useful work here. "Try to make him good", was your grandfather's instruction to me. He was now my sole care and comfort; very, very dear to me has he always been. God grant that each of you may follow in his footsteps in so far as he follows Christ, and may He also grant that if you are ever called on to suffer in mind, body, or estate, you may be enabled to say, "It was good for me that I have been afflicted - before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have learned to keep Thy law". Love God and keep His Commandments. Though lonely enough, I did not sit down and mope. I had a mission in life to carry out, or see carried out - the wishes and intentions of your grandfather, both in respect of your father personally, and also in respect of the property left in charge of myself and co-trustees for your father's benefit when he came of age. With the

property I had kind assistance from my co-trustees and managers, but no one interfered with your father, which was a great comfort to me. I had to set myself to work, and will now tell you how I got on. Not being well acquainted with business, I looked up and studied all the written documents I could find, and well I did so, for the knowledge I thereby gained was of much service to me afterwards. There had been a great deal of misunderstanding with the agent of the Canterbury Association about the terms on which your grandfather and his brother held both the Riccarton estate and the Homebush Run, neither of which were quite settled so far as written documents were concerned, though an understanding had been come to more than a year before, and it was quite another year before the Crown grant of this property (Riccartern), or the lease of the Homebush Run, were given to me. And many another battle had to be fought about both places years after that. The cattle sheds had just been commenced to be built at Riccarton (the old ones that were pulled down when your father built the brick steading). The photos of them hang in your father's room. My cousin, Douglas Graham, who came out with us from home, was left in charge of the farm, and had the old house to live in. Mr John Cordy had just built a new house at Homebush, and entered on his charge of the station for seven years. The weather had been very wet before they started, and when they reached the banks of the Hawkins the river was in flood, and they had to camp under the drays for three days and nights, the nearest abode being a hut fifteen miles behind them. It was a cheerless prospect for them entering upon a new undertaking. The timber for all the housing at Riccarton and Homebush was cut from the

Riccarton Bush. The late James Johnston, builder, with the help of Robert Hall, carpenter, did all the carpentering work. The original milking sheds and yards were across the river from the present ones. They had stood about twelve years, and having been thatched with toi and other grasses, were in rather a dilapidated condition. The new sheds were gone on with as speedily as Possible under the circumstances and with the prospect of a new dwelling-house to be built for myself.

The farm work went on as usual under Mr Graham's management. When the description of the house to be built for me was decided on (viz., weatherboard, brick-knagged with brick chimneys on concrete foundations), and the plans and specifications drawn out, the materials for the building had to be got and prepared, the timber seasoned, and the bricks made. Contracts were let to sawyers to get the timber from the Bush. Most of the gravel for making the concrete foundations was got on the flat ground below Mr Wood's house on the riverbank. There was no lime to be had, so Mr Johnston, the builder, and his boys all went to Sumner, gathered shells that were found in heaps then, and brought them here to burn into lime. He dug a kiln on the riverbank above the stable (where the fine elm tree was afterwards planted), and made a hole in the bank lower down to draw out the lime when burned.

Then the kiln was filled with large logs of black pine and shells in alternate layers, the fire kindled, and left to burn out. The odour from it was not always pleasant, but it had to be done, and there was no use fretting. The bricks were made by hand in the comer of the Bush just then lately cleared, behind where mamma's flower garden is now, and they were also burnt in a primitive fashion. Long pits were

made (I forget how deep, but rather shallow); these were lined with bricks that had been made and slightly dried in the sun for a few days. Large logs of black pine were placed between the rows, the fire lighted, and the whole covered with earth to keep in the heat till the process of burning was finished. I forget about the sand for the mortar, but believe it came from the riverbed of the Waimakariri. The shingles for the roof were split in the Bush from the sugarloaf white pine. I fear there are few specimens of these fine trees left. The front door, four French windows, locks and fastenings, had been bought from Mr Russell, of Ham, who brought them from home for his house at Ilam, and did not use them. The other doors and windows were made from the bush timber, excepting the doors of the night nursery and jam closet upstairs. They were also bought from Mr Russell. When the ground was marked out and the trenches cut for the foundations, the shingle was carted at odd times. The timber was also brought out of the Bush and stacked on the lawn to get better seasoned, and quicker than in the Bush. Many a turn did poor old Johnston give it, both before and after planing it. Three-fourths of the work must have been done by his own hands. The linings of the roofs and passages testify to the labour he bestowed on the timber. He took great pride in making it look nice. There was great difficulty in getting hair to bind the plaster on the walls and ceilings downstairs. At length half a sackful was got to do the whole. A touch would make the walls crumble. The paper has been a great support to them. I think I mentioned before that the site for the house had been chosen and prepared by your grandfather, who would have commenced the building had he been spared a few months longer.

There was frequent trouble with the sawyers in the Bush. There was no means of preventing them from wastefully destroying fine trees that might have remained standing. They usually clear all before them. It was often a trouble to get the materials carted by the farm hands to allow the building to be got on with, and it was fully a year and a-half from the time it was commenced till finished.

A fine horse was nearly drowned at the door one day. It was carting gravel for the foundations, and while the man in charge was clearing a way for it to discharge the load at the proper place, it backed right into the river in front. It was got out not much the worse, with the help of about a dozen men who were working close at hand. The cart and harness were cut and injured. About two months after your grandfather's death your Aunt Grace, then a little girl about ten years old, came to stay with me till my brothers Hugh and George, whom I had sent for, should arrive from Scotland. Till then (I mean till Aunt Grace came) other friends very kindly stayed with me in turns, viz.: Mrs Gebbie, who was with me at the time of the death; Mrs Williams (afterwards Mrs Cass), her daughter Miss Williams (Mrs Innes), Mrs McDonald (my New Zealand mother), and Miss Cordy. Mr Watts Russell, of Ilam, kindly allowed his gardener, John McGillivray (an Ayrshire man), to prune the fruit trees. I retained the management of the Bush and planting of trees in my own hands. I had imbibed a taste for that sort of outdoor work from my father, who did a great deal of planting both for himself and neighbouring proprietors, who did not always live on their properties, but entrusted the management of them to my father, who was once described as "a man who had changed the whole face of the country". And so he had, with planting.

Your grandfather intended doing the same, but only lived to accomplish part, viz., the belt on the east side of the garden and the point at the bend of the river below the dam. He left large nurseries of young trees, Scotch firs and other pines, which, I am sorry to say, I was very unsuccessful in transplanting, though several grew to be very handsome trees, but lately a blight has come over them, and about twenty other varieties of pines all over the country, as well as here, which will be a serious loss as well as disappointment.

I have mentioned before that the Maoris used to plant and dig the potatoes in the fields for many years. A few months before the house was finished, but after it was roofed, they set fire to their butts (then on the island) in the hope that they would be allowed to occupy the new house. I stood firm in resisting their petition to do so, but allowed them the use of the "old barn" till they erected other huts down the riverbank near the railway bridge.

At length the house was so far finished that I began to move my furniture into it by degrees. The larger boxes and my wardrobe had to be hauled in through the upstairs windows before they were put in. I could see no other plan of getting rid of the tradesmen, and wanted to get settled before the winter set in, and was expecting the arrival immediately of my brothers and Miss Eaglesome to be married to Mr Douglas Graham, my cousin and manager, who was to live in the old house, and I could not well put them all up in such a small house (one sitting-room and three bedrooms and a store loft).

Your Aunt Grace's father, Mr Lyon, was one of my co-trustees with Mr Brittan and my brother-in-law (James Young Deans, of Kirkstyle). Mr Lyon came down on a visit in September, 1885, bringing and

leaving behind him for a change his son Willie, then about seven years old. He was a difficult boy to manage, and I could not keep him away from the river. One day, 6th February, 1856, he was playing at the end of the bridge at the farm with another boy, about nine years old. Both got into the river and were drowned. It was a terrible scene. No assistance could be rendered, as both had sunk before the men could reach them. They (the men) were working at the far end of the Bush. I had lifted and carried away your father (then two and a-half years old), and gone to the garden to order the vegetables for dinner (I always took a walk round every morning with your father). I had scarcely reached the garden when Aunt Grace came running to tell me the boys were in the river, and could not get out. I threw your father down and asked Mrs Heslop, the gardener's wife, to bring him down with her own child, about the same age. I flew down and thought I saw Willie Lyon's red head floating down, and ran to jump in and get hold of him at the sluice, but alas! it was only the Noah's Ark they had been playing with. There had been three days' heavy rain ("southerly burster" as it was called), and though fine that day, the river was still muddy, and it was twenty minutes before the first body was found (Pierce, son of one of the harvesters). Two doctors were on the spot almost as soon as the first body was taken from the water - Drs. Barker and Fisher. It was fully half an hour before Willie Lyon was found. Nothing could be done for them after being so long in the water, though all the usual remedies were tried. Of course, after such a dreadful calamity I could not keep Aunt Grace longer from her sorrowing parents, who had so kindly allowed me to keep her so long. I had heard of the wreck of the ship that my brothers came in, near Melbourne,

but thought they were on board another till I got their letters telling me of the wreck. They saved their clothes. No lives were lost. It was the first voyage of a fine new ship, the "Schonberg". They remained in Victoria about three months visiting Uncle James, who lived there then, but came here about six months after them. This hurried my flitting, and I came into this house on the 7th March, 1856, before the doors and windows were all in or the floors laid in the two downstairs bedrooms. The timber for that ran short, and as there was none seasoned enough to put down, an exchange was made with Mr Stewart, of the Royal Hotel, for the floor of the pavilion erected for the ball for the Governor (Gore Browne) a few months before. It was the middle of April before the tradesmen were finished.

Just a day or two before the Rev. Mr and Mrs Fraser, our minister and wife, arrived. They stayed six weeks with me, to my great pleasure and comfort after those sad events.

While my new house was a-building, I remained in the old. Your Aunt Grace, then a little girl of nine or ten, came to stay with me till your uncles (Hugh and George), whom I had sent home for, should arrive. Her father (Mr Lyon), my co-trustee, paid us several visits on business, at one time bringing with him his son James and daughter Maggie (now Mrs Kenny), and the following spring his son Willie to remain with Grace during the rest of her stay with me. My old friends, Mrs McDonald (my New Zealand mother), Mr and Mrs Sidey, of Kaiapoi, Mr Waitt, Mr Caverhill, and some others were very kind in spending a night or a few days with me as often as they could, and did their best to cheer me up and encourage me in my responsible undertaking. At the New Year (1855) I had to part with my good and

faithful married couple, William and Mary Wraight, and the change was not an improvement so far as I was concerned, as you will hear further on if I am spared to proceed with this letter. The new man was more of a farm servant, and, of course, suited Mr Graham better, but his wife was anything but nice. On the 25th of January we had a severe shock of earthquake, the worst that I had felt till then. It did a great deal of damage in Nelson and Wellington, though not so much here. It came about nine in the evening. I was sitting reading, when all at once the house began to rattle, and my chair felt to be upsetting. The pictures swung on the walls, and the lamp on the table shook from side to side as if it would capsize. It was over in a few seconds, but lasted long enough to make everyone's face pale, and their limbs to tremble. That was a "shake". In the middle of the night a very sharp "upheaval" one came, shorter but more alarming. Your Aunt Grace was sleeping with me, and was so frightened she grasped my throat with terror and nearly choked me before I got her released. Slight shocks continued to come every night for many weeks after, possibly during the day as well, but when moving about they were not felt. The weather at the time was mild and beautiful, being midsummer. In the evenings the eastern sky had a most peculiar appearance for weeks at sunset - a lurid blue shading to yellow. We used to watch it so anxiously, thinking it must have something to do with the earthquakes. I will never forget the sensation. The autumn was fine. I don't remember the winter much, except my troubles with the garden, getting the pruning done. In the spring of 1854 Abner Clough was brought down from Homebush to assist Wraight in digging the garden and getting the seeds sown. In the winter

of 1855 I got a man from month to month to do the digging and pruning. He took the world easy sitting on a stool to prune the currant bushes trained on espalier. It was too much of a good thing, and after getting his wages on a Saturday night he left without further notice. I was not sorry, though I had to do most of the pruning of the gooseberries myself. In those days both the large plots in the old orchard were planted about four feet apart with apples, pears, gooseberries, peaches, etc., etc. I had to part with my maidservant on account of Mrs McLachlan, the married woman, so had my housework to do as well. About the middle of August a ship arrived with a good supply of emigrants, and hearing Mr John Hay, now of Temuka, was on board, I applied to him to send me both a gardener and maidservant. This he did most satisfactorily. I was busy pruning away at the gooseberry bushes in the middle of the plot, your Aunt Grace amusing your father on the paths. On turning round my dress (a print one) caught on the bushes and tore half a yard each way. I gathered it up and was getting through the gate going home when I met Wm. Hislop and Annie Asher coming from the ship to see after the situation. I was so pleased with the appearance of both, that I engaged them both at once, and never had any just cause to regret doing so. Annie remained with me over two years, and the Hislops, who had the cottage to live in, remained over three and a-half years. He started the once well-known Woodburn Nursery down Antigua Street. I am sorry to add that, though conscientious and hard-working, he has never done much good for himself. He is now in Invercargill. Mrs Hislop did needlework. He entered into the views of a true colonist - at once saw the necessity for planting,

and was the most successful raiser of trees from cuttings I ever had.

In September Mr Lyon paid us another business visit, bringing his son Willie. I had never been to Homebush, and as Mr Lyon wanted to go, I went also, taking your father, then two years old, your Aunt Grace and her brother Willie, and an old man, McLachlan, to drive us, his daughter and her husband being the married couple with Mr Cordy. Mr Lyon rode on "Cockle", a fine horse. The Cordys gave us a hearty welcome, but I am sure they must have been glad to see us off again, such a party, with a large family of their own, and we were stormstead three days, and Mr Lyon ill with swollen face from the cold and wet. He undertook to pilot us there, as there was no track. He pulled up near the Gorge Hill, so we had a long round of it. It was pleasant and exciting driving over the tussocks, the weather being fine going and coming. There was no track beyond where the racecourse is now. We had to steer for the Flagpole Hill, but in the middle of the day it got obscured with fog. On our return the Hawkins River was very high, and Mr James Cordy kindly rode through before us to lead us by the proper ford. The water was coming in at our feet in the old dogcart, which stood pretty high. The little calf that was born the day I arrived at Riccarton, and given to me by your grandfather, was brought in at Homebush with her first calf the night we went up. She was a fine cow (dark roan), and when fattened for beef in 1867 to go to the West Coast diggings she was sold with a lot of others at £18 a head, a great price. After Mr Lyon left, I took another trip with your father, Aunt Grace and Willie Lyon to Lyttelton and the Head of Bays. We drove to the foot of the hills, down the Ferry Road, crossing the Heathcote on the punt,

along the foot of the hills to just a little way above where the mouth of the tunnel now is. There we took out the horse, unharnessed him, and put on the saddle we had taken with us. On it we fastened a tin travelling box I had, containing what might be required for all of us for a week's visiting. Hislop, took charge of the horse and baggage, and I, with the children, trudged up the bridle path. We reached our destination in safety, viz., my dear old friend, Mrs McDonald. Hislop was sent back with the horse and dogcart, to return at the time fixed for us. We spent two days with Mrs McDonald, then we took a boat to the Head of the Bay with an experienced boatman, and reached Mrs Gebbie's in the evening. There was a long mile to walk after landing. Mrs Gebbie was kindness itself. She took us over as much of her place as she could, and then took us to spend a day with her neighbours, the Mansons, who came out with your grandfather and built the old houses at the farm here. Both families - the Gebbies and Mansons - had large herds of cows, some of which they rented from your grandfather, and they set a good example to many others by engaging a tutor (Mr Blatchford) between them for the education of their large young families. They built a schoolhouse and kept him entirely between them. He married Manson's eldest daughter, and has a large family. The Mansons had seventeen, all alive, when they grew up. Five Gebbies grew up.

Both going to and returning from Mrs Gebbie's we had to start to answer the tide as it ebbs a long way down from the Head of the Bay, leaving a great mud flat, and a boat getting stuck in that might have to remain there with its freight, living or dead, till the tide rose again to float it off. It might be twelve

hours. Now there is a good road all the way up from Lyttelton, and the train to it.

These letters are to give you an idea of the state of the country before many improvements had been made, the ways of living and modes of travelling before roads and bridges were made.

December of 1855 and January of 1856 were both very wet months. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th of February were very wet, and the river rose about a foot, and was very muddy. On the 6th the two boys (Willie and Pierce) were drowned at the farm. I have already described the dreadful scene. I got a chance about the end of the month to send your Aunt Grace home to Wellington, and as Mrs Gebbie could stay with me for a few weeks then, I took the opportunity of flitting into this new house on the 7th of March. Two or three days after, John McLachlan, at the farm, was going to sweep the chimney there, when he was suddenly seized with a violent pain in his side. The doctor ordered a fly blister at once. His wife thought he was going to die, and, instead of attending to him, thought fit to scrub out the other house for Mr Graham, and made so free with his whisky, which was not locked up, that by the evening she was mad drunk, and it took four men to put her to bed beside her poor husband, who was suffering from the inflammation and pain of the blister. Next morning, when Mrs Gebbie and I went down to ask for the poor man, she was still mad, and shook her fist at us from the bed, her husband bathing her temples and trying to pacify her (he, poor man, lying with his side uncovered, showing the raw flesh where the blister had been taken off). There was no one to cook the men's food, about half a dozen of them living in the kitchen then, and there being no help for it, I had to send my girl Annie to cook for them, and Mrs

Gebbie and I did for ourselves. Such was Mrs McLachlan, the woman who was to find the place left vacant by my good friend Mrs Wraight, now at Dunsandel. The shock of such a sight so soon after the drowning cases was too much for my nervous system, and brought on one of the worst illnesses I ever had. I soon recovered, and had to get the tradesmen out of the house. Mrs Gebbie kindly stayed with me till the arrival of the Rev. Mr and Mrs Fraser, in the middle of April. (I have written about them in a previous part of this letter, and need not repeat). They stayed with me till the beginning of June, and before they left I had the great joy of welcoming my two brothers, Hugh and George, on the 10th of May, 1856. They had both grown since I saw them four years previously, and though looking well, Hugh had caught a cold, which threatened to settle on his lungs, and which kept me very anxious for several months on his account. The fine weather in spring and summer happily restored him to health and strength, and the company of the two brightened me up very much. In September the one rode and the other drove your father and me to Homebush, where we spent two nights and a day with Mr and Mrs Cordy, who showed us great kindness. I remained with Mrs Cordy while your uncles rode over the run to select a site for the sheep station which they were to manage for your father's uncle Deans in Scotland. The timber for the house was cut from the Riccarton Bush and taken up in drays, there being no good timber nearer, and your grandfather had promised his brother to give the timber for the house when required. On the 9th of October your Uncle James arrived from Melbourne, where he had been for four years. He preferred joining his brothers here to remaining alone in

Australia. I had taken my passage in the 'Zingari' (the first steamer on the coast) to pay my promised visit to my friends Mr and Mrs Lyon, in Wellington. The steamer was to sail next day (the 10th), and as your uncle would not hear of my putting off my visit on his account, I left him with the other two to cook and do everything for themselves. The morning was fine when we left, but it soon commenced to rain. We drove, as usual, to the foot of the hill, left the dogcart there, fixed the boxes on the packhorse, your Uncle George riding the other to the top of the hill with your father on the saddle before him. It was a weary trudge to the top, the rain coming down in torrents, and the path was so slippery it seemed unsafe to ride down, so we all walked and drove the horses in front. When near the foot your Uncle James took up your father to carry him through a very bad part of the road. They had not gone far before your uncle slipped and fell on his back in the mud, with your father in his arms, and could not rise till a gentleman (the Rev. Mr Aldred, Wesleyan minister, still in Christchurch) came to their assistance, your Uncle George having gone on with the horses. We found the steamer would not leave till the afternoon, so, drenched and weary, we had to wait about the town, not very big then, till the time came to embark. We had to get a small boat to take us out to the steamer lying out beyond Officers' Point. There were no breakwaters or large wharves then. I should have mentioned the steamer was commanded by Captain Milton, long since retired from a seafaring life, and an old and much-respected settler here. Of course, we went to bed immediately on going aboard, and reached our destination, Wellington, in 24 hours, on a beautiful, bright afternoon. We had been very sick, and the

stewardesses of those days were not so very obliging, so it was as much as I could do to dress your father and myself after being in the harbour, and when we came to our anchorage Mr Lyon came on board to take us on shore. We were a sorry-looking sight in our mud-bespattered garments, meeting the gaily-dressed people taking their afternoon stroll. Mr Lyon carried your father in one arm and gave me the, other, as I was very weak with the sickness and want of food. I cannot eat on the steamers. We had a very kind welcome, and enjoyed our five weeks' visit very much. We returned by the next trip of the steamer, leaving at six o'clock on the Thursday morning and reaching Lyttelton at eleven o'clock on Saturday night. We had hoped to reach port in 24 hours, but, alas! "the best laid schemes of mice and men aft gang agley" and so did ours on this occasion, for about nine o'clock the funnel caught fire, and such a racket of buckets and water and sawing of iron to saw the funnel off and throw it overboard into the sea. The weather was calm, with a misty drizzle, and we drifted about for some hours till they got a canvas funnel erected. Next night and day we were doing what we could to reach Lyttelton, but before doing so the canvas funnel had also caught fire, and had to be cut away and be thrown after the other. It was very dark coming up the harbour, and we had to stop several times to make sure of our position. No one was allowed to land till the following morning. I was so glad to see daylight, and ordered a boat to get on shore when one came alongside. We had both been very sick all the time, and I had tasted nothing but water for three days - your father only a biscuit or two - so you may fancy how weak we were, and the difficulty I had in dressing both of us and getting our luggage gathered

together. A boat was waiting for me alongside, and just as I was putting my things into it another came up with my kind friend Mr Sidey, who thought I might be on board. He arranged with the boatman and transferred my luggage to his boat, taking me ashore to another friend's house for breakfast. Mr and Mrs Hargreaves received us very kindly, and we rested with them till next day, when my brothers came for us, and brought us home in the same manner as we had gone. Mr Sidey had kindly sent them word of our arrival. There were no telegraphs in those days. Only messengers or chances.

It was on that visit that I made the acquaintance of your grandpapa and grandmamma Park in Wellington, and asked them to visit me when they came to Canterbury, which they did in January following. I saw a large auger in Wellington for boring post-holes in the ground, which I thought might be a saving of labour here or at Homebush, as there was a great deal of fencing to do on both places. It cost £9. It took two men to work it, being too heavy for one, and soon got thrown aside as too unwieldy. I must say I felt rather disappointed. I found all alright at home, except that a few choice trees and shrubs had been blown down by a heavy nor'-west gale, showing the necessity of planting the island for protection. A few weeks after our return we started again to pay another visit to Teviotdale to Mrs Waitt, where my good old friend, Mrs McDonald, was also staying with Mrs Waitt, her daughter, Mr Waitt being in England on a business visit. The manager, Mr Meldrum, arranged to call for us and act as our guide, which he did very nicely. It is about 35 miles from here. Uncles James and Hugh went with us; one rode and the other drove. The roads were only tracks then, and much worse than the

Homebush track, there being so many swamps to avoid and the sandhills at Kaiapoi, and the punt on the Waimakariri. The rivers Ashley, Kowai and Waipara were all low and easily forded. You must visit that country yourselves some time to get an idea of the great changes that have taken place on the earth's surface. To see the mighty power of God in raising the bed of the ocean hundreds of feet, where you see great blocks of rocks composed entirely of shells, and where the Waipara has forced a passage for itself through the Gorge, the layers of shells and clay are very distinct. We returned home by Mount Grey to visit Mrs O'Connell, and spent two days very enjoyably with her and her family, and as she wanted to come to town, and we had room for her and one of her sons in the old dogcart, they came with us and acted as our guides, the route being slightly off the other swamps, which were thus avoided. Our horses left us for home the day after we got to Teviotdale, but were traced and found in a big swamp and brought back, and shut up the following nights.

Letter Three

16th December, 1887.

Another Anniversary Day, and one, I trust, that will be remembered for good by us and all the congregation of St. Andrew's, for, after a vacancy Of twenty months, the Rev. Gordon Webster, late of Girvan, Ayrshire, has been inducted by the Presbytery of Christchurch as our minister. God grant that this may be a happy union of pastor and people, and that the work of this day may redound to His glory in the salvation of souls in our congregation and the advancement of His Kingdom in the hearts of all of every denomination. Mr Webster is the third minister sent by God to labour amongst us. May He also send His Holy Spirit into the heart of pastor and people, that they may labour more and more with a single eye to His glory, Who hath helped us hitherto. Four ministers took part in the services. The Rev. Mr Munroe, Sydenham, preached the sermon, "On doing the work we have severally been sent into the world to do, for the night cometh when no man can work." He applied his remarks to minister, and people alike, as we are all doing God's work here. The Rev. Mr Hill, of Lyttelton, who has been our Moderator during our long vacancy, put the formal questions to Mr Webster and inducted him, then the Rev. Mr Erwin, of North Belt, addressed him, pointing out the duties required of a faithful minister; and Mr Irwin, of Woolston, addressed the people, pointing out their special duties to their minister, to know him and esteem him as their minister set over them in the Lord, to love him, help him with his work, and make suitable provision for him. The Rev. Mr Hill then offered a

most impressive prayer for all parties, and after a hymn had been sung, pronounced the Benediction. Mr Webster stood at the door to receive the right hand of fellowship from the congregation as they left the church. The ministers of the Presbytery had already done so immediately after Mr Hill's induction service was over. Your mamma was busy at the Oddfellows' Hall with a tea-meeting in connection with it. I am so sorry your father could not be present, being in the middle of his shearing at Waimarama. There was a good turn out of the congregation.

The years are rolling by faster than I am getting on with the narrative of events relating to myself in particular, as showing God's protecting care over the widow and fatherless who trust in Him, and to give you an idea of the country in its natural state and the progress of the work of civilisation in reclaiming the waste lands and making the desert become a fruitful field. You are to remember there was little or nothing on all these wide plains but tussock grass, fern, toi-toi, wild Irishman on the dry ground, with large flax swamps, with raupo and boggy creeks, dangerous to man and beast, with only this Riccarton Bush and one at Papanui now all gone, within easy distance of Christchurch. No fences, except a few on Riccarton Farm, that your grandfather and his brother William had made; no houses but the old ones at the farm; no bridges but the few they had also made for their own convenience; no railways nor any of the comforts and luxuries we now enjoy. My descriptions of my rambles through the country are to give you an idea of the difficulties of travelling and the manner of life of the early settlers, and why the Anniversary Day is still kept with so much rejoicing. It is an Ebenezer -

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us". We can look back with pleasure on the difficulties we have been enabled to overcome, and with grateful pride on the fruits of the labour and capital spent in reclaiming the wilderness - not only making the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose, but the Progress of the country in every department: churches, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, railways, telegraphs, machinery of every description for labour-saving both to the farmer and the mechanic, which you will see at the yearly Agricultural and Pastoral Association's Show, with the improved stock of the country. All these great advantages, with grinding taxation, to pay the interest on the money borrowed to pay for these luxuries. We old people look back with pleasure on the days when we had fewer luxuries, and less anxieties, because of lighter burdens.

I am forgetting that the "night cometh when no man can work," and I have not got far on with my self-imposed task. Before taking my trip to Wellington I had started in earnest with the planting of the several patches on the farm. Hislop planted the patch at the south-west side corner of the Bush as a protecting nurse to the trees "not planted by the hand of man," They were mostly poplars and willows, with elms at greater distances for permanent trees, a few Scotch firs, and about three years later on, some ash trees, grown from seed we brought from Scotland, were planted by Monroe, my next gardener, who only stayed six months with me - a capital worker, now dead. Blanks required filling in yearly by trees raised by ourselves from cuttings.

In January, 1857, my servant left, and I was quite without for a month, but your uncles were staying with me, and lit the fire in the mornings and brought

the water, which was all to carry from the river, which was beautifully clear and pure then, and made such delicious tea. Mrs Waitt and her daughter Mary (afterwards Mrs Treherne) had come from Teviotdale by arrangement to stay with me to be near at hand on Mr Waitt's arrival from his trip Home. Mrs Waitt was much crippled from rheumatism, and had breakfast in bed. I had a great quantity of fruit and a great deal of jam to make, and the weather was excessively hot. There were no servants to be got, and in the midst of it I had two more arrivals to be taken in. First, Miss Eaglesome and her two brothers, Mathew and Robert and David McMillan. About half an hour after another arrival, your Grandfather and Grandmother Park, from Wellington, on their first visit. Under the circumstances, without a servant, and the previous arrivals, I was not sure about taking them in to stay, as I had not a comfortable room to give them, but your grandfather soon put that right by telling me they had slept under a flax bush. Your uncles turned out of what is now the day nursery, and your grandfather and grandmother had that room during their short stay of a week. But it was a very hearty one, Mrs Waitt being an old friend of theirs also. Miss Eaglesome had just come from Scotland to marry Mr Douglas Graham, who had asked me to keep her till their marriage after harvest. The young men went to him at the farm. The harvest was in full swing, and we had just started the first reaping machine in the place. It was a Bell's Improved, rather heavy and clumsy; the horses pushed behind, and your grandfather was quite in ecstasies over it, walking alongside, watch in hand, timing it. He was, very merry, and we had such jolly evenings, songs all round, as many could or would sing. We had only

the parlour for meals, but it was quite wonderful how elastic it was, and how good-naturedly people took what, they got in those days. In the house each did their own bedroom. I did the cooking, all but the bread, which Mrs Hislop, did for me. It was all home-made bread in those days. Mrs Park and Miss Eaglesome helped me to wash up after each meal, and helped generally.

Either the last Sunday in January or first in February, I forget which, we had the pleasure of opening our new church, St. Andrew's. It was supposed to be seated for about three hundred people. Mr Fraser preached in the morning from the text, "Holiness becometh Thy house for ever"; Mr Aldred (Wesleyan), whose church we had had the use of for some months past, in the afternoon; and Mr Fraser again in the evening. There, were good congregations each time, and the collections amounted to over £60. Many who were leading members then left us in after years, some for one reason, some for another; some going to one denomination, some to another; and, saddest of all, some never again entered a place of worship to acknowledge God as their Creator and Redeemer.

Soon after Mr Waitt's arrival he took his family to Casterton. The harvest being gathered in, the marriage would have taken place at once, but had to be postponed on account of a severe illness Miss Eaglesome had - fever from the change coming off the voyage. She had share of my bed and room, but I had to give her the whole and make a shakedown on the floor. I had to get a servant, a rough Irish girl, but kind-hearted, and about to be married, too. I had my first experience of toothache, and it was a wild, mad one. Dr. Barker came up and took it out, but I could not lift up my head for a day after

because of the bleeding and faintness. Well, my brothers had bought about 1000 sheep from the late Mr R. Rhodes, and Uncle James was to go with him to Timaru to take delivery and bring them home. So as the marriage could not go on for a week or two, Douglas Graham thought he might take the journey and see the country also, as he had never been farther away than Homebush. Off the three started, but when they reached the Rakaia it was in flood, impossible to cross. They camped on the banks for the night (there were neither houses nor bridge, recollect). Next morning it commenced a three days' sou'-wester, and on the third night back they all came, drenched and cold. Mr Rhodes and Uncle James started two days after, and were more fortunate for weather next time. The bride-to-be was much better, and hearing of the difficulties of the journey and the large rivers to ford or swim, she would not hear of her bridegroom risking his life again, so the marriage was arranged to take place the following week, though all were sorry Uncle James would not be back in time for it. The ceremony took place in the parlour, Mr Fraser officiating, Uncle Hugh groomsman, and Mary Waitt bridesmaid. We had dinner afterwards in the drawing-room - a real Scotch one, though I only remember haggis being specially requested by the bridegroom. I used to pride myself that I could make a few Scotch dishes nicely, and that was one. After tea we danced and sang and played (Mrs Fraser and I played as we could for the dancing), and after toddy time the newly-married couple went home to the farm. I had to put up the others. The following week the young couple and Uncle Hugh started on a wedding tour to the Bays. They went to port the usual way - mail gig to the foot and walked over.

They started to walk to Mrs Gebbie's via Mrs Manson's, and Mrs Graham having only just recovered from her illness, it was rather a fatiguing trudge for her. There was no road - only a bridle track, not very tempting - but as I never travelled it, I will not try to describe it. Suffice it to say, they all received a hearty welcome from both families (as who ever did not from them?), and after spending a few days, returned home to settle down, pleased with all they had seen, though wearied with travel.

Soon after the Grahams' return, another visit was proposed and undertaken. This was a visit to my old, kind friends, Mr and Mrs Hay, at Pigeon Bay. Their family still inherit and live there, and you know some of them. We started in the morning to Lyttelton, where Mr Hay had a whale-boat in readiness for us, the visit having been arranged. Our party consisted of the Rev. Mr and Mrs Fraser, Miss Miln (now Mrs Ronaldson), another young lady, your Uncle George, your father (then about 3½ years old), and myself. The boat's crew were two men (Tom White and another). There had been a strong nor'-east wind all day, which raised a heavy sea, and as there was the appearance of nor'-west, we waited till late in the afternoon for the sea to calm down. We were pretty crowded with our luggage, and the steersman had to sit with his legs over the stem. He got cramped just as we got into a jumping sea, passing Port Levy. Miss Miln said she would steer if directed how and what to do. Your Uncle had to take an oar and help T. White to row. Mr Fraser was lying in bottom, very sick, his wife attending on him. I was sitting in the stern with your father on my knee, and the grey plaid wrapped round us to keep hold of him. We were both very sick, and I could not have held him, Miss Miln next got sick, and threw up the

steering cord. Fortunately the short rest relieved the man, and he took it up again. The water got smoother after we passed Port Levy Heads, but it was now dark and no moon, but the sky was clear. We had to land the other young lady at Sinclairs' (now Holm's) Bay, which detained us a little, and it was a ten o'clock when we reached the Hays', and coo-ee-ed for lights to see land. We were soon all made as comfortable as the effects of the sickness would allow. The family and servants were preparing for bed, the younger members snug in theirs, but they soon got up the fires and made a nice tea for us, which was most acceptable and refreshing. We were a helpless lot, but they spared no pains to make us comfortable. I remember Mr Fraser (who suffered most) lying on the sofa in the sitting-room, your father and I lying together on the floor till after tea, when we revived and, sat up, but it took Mr Fraser all next day to recover. There was one spare room, which the Frasers occupied, and when I was shown to mine was vexed to think some of the children had been turned out of it to give it to Miss Miln, your father and myself. Such was the kind, warm-hearted hospitality of those days, standing out in glowing contrast to the present. We spent two days very pleasantly, and left at six on Saturday morning as Mr Fraser had to be back for Sunday. Mr Hay had volunteered to walk over the hills to Purau with me and carry your father, if the sea was rough, to save me the risk of sickness again. The morning and sea were beautifully calm and fine, so we all returned by boat, Mrs Hay taking the precaution to put hot bricks under my feet in the bottom of the boat. I ought to have mentioned that we spent the previous afternoon and evening with Mrs Sinclair and family. It was her husband who brought your Great-Uncle

William Deans and the Gebbies and Mansons here from Wellington, and returned for the Hays and his own family in his own boat. He was afterwards lost in it, with some friends, going to Wellington for provisions. The family went to Honolulu many years ago, and have been very prosperous there. Well, we started to return under favourable circumstances, but just outside the Heads met a heavy sou'-wester coming up which raised the sea tremendously, and we had to keep almost within oar's length of the rocks all the way round to prevent being blown out to sea. Mr Hay said afterwards he would have given anything to have us all back, and I well remember old T. White took the steer-line and never took his eye off the hill tops, where the fringes of heavy thunder clouds were driving before the wind. By the time we passed Port Levy Heads the thunder had also passed, but we could hear the distant rumble, and see flashes of lightning far out at sea. We had escaped the worst of the storm, for it had been severe on the Plains. When we reached a small bay inside the Lyttelton Heads we had to give the men an hour's rest, they being exhausted with pulling. Mrs Hay had provided us with sandwiches and bottles of tea, which were most acceptable, it being now past midday. We still kept creeping round close to the rocks till we came to Diamond Harbour. There the men hoisted the sail to bring us across to Lyttelton. The men on board the vessels in port all watched, and wondered what mad people had ventured to do so on such a day. On taking down the sail a heavy wave broke over us, and I feared we would not right again, but the next landed us high and dry on the beach, where the railway station now stands, all of us with grateful hearts, for our merciful preservation. Your Uncle George helped me to the

top of the hill with your father, then ran down to stop the mail gig for us. We got home, with thankful hearts, from our never-to-be-forgotten adventure.

On arriving at home we learned that Uncle James had also arrived that day from Timaru with the sheep, and had camped the previous night with them in Burke's woolshed and yards, just beyond Lansdowne, which was not in existence then. He had the full benefit of the thunderstorm which we had just escaped. After resting a few days, the brothers started with the sheep for the sheep station (Te Pukiti Marama), Homebush. Their house was now built there, and two of the brothers, your uncles, arranged to live there, and one was to remain with me, which arrangement they carried out in three-monthly turns for nearly two years. About the end of May they invited your father (nearly four years old) and Mrs Fraser and me to pay them a visit, which we did for a fortnight. The place was very rough then - all fern, flax, toi-toi and tussocks. They wanted to make a nice garden in spring, so they camped the sheep every night on that place, which killed the fern and manured the ground, so that everything grew so fast that in two years they had abundance of fruit, strawberries, gooseberries, currants and peaches. The apples took a year longer, but they had plenty of vegetables the first summer. They had made their own furniture - bedsteads, chairs and sofa - of wood which we made a mattress for, stuffing it with tussock grass. It was often very useful as a bed when extra visitors came. We took up blankets, etc., for our own bedroom, as they had only what they required for themselves and the dogcart was very commodious, so that we could easily take bring all we required. We enjoyed our visit very much, and I daresay dressmakers were

glad to see us back, as we needed a new "rig-out". We took long walks over the hills, and the rough fern fringed our dresses quite a finger length deep round the bottom. Of course, we drove over to Homebush to call on Mrs Cordy. About September your father and I were again invited, and took Mrs Graham with us. Uncles Hugh and George had gone to Ashburton to get some rams, and Uncle James was busy with the garden, so we all helped him, raking and gathering tutu roots, which grew very strong there, the berries being very poisonous to people, horses, sheep, and cattle. When dry the roots made capital firewood, which was a saving to them, as they had to go to near the Gorge Hill for dead trunks of an old forest there, and to the Kowai Bush for posts and rails for fencing. The sandflies were very bad, our faces, hands and necks being a mass of red lumps, which were very painful. We had a cold, rough day coming home, with occasional hail showers. We were very glad to take shelter from one in a deserted sod hut, where we lit a fire and made some tea in a billy with water from the wheel ruts. It was delicious.

It is so long ago, I cannot now remember whether it was the summer of 1858 or 1859, that I paid my second visit to Mrs Gebbie and the Mansons at the Head of the Bay. The date is of little consequence, but I am inclined to think it was in 1858, so will describe the route. We drove "Prince" the grey roan horse, in the dogcart. The road was laid off up the Lincoln Road, about four miles from Christchurch. After that it was a track. I should have said that as Mr Manson and John Gebbie were in town on business, we took advantage of having their company as guides on their return home. We enjoyed the drive exceedingly round the foot of the hills. The track lay through Mr Burke's sheepyards,

across a rickety bridge over a small stream which joined the Tai Tapu (Halswell) near there. About this place we had entered into the "Big Swamp", and were obliged to keep to a natural ridge of sandhills running through it for about four miles, here and there boggy creeks crossing this sandy ridge. Horses used to dread those places. At one of them we found a deep ditch cut right across the track. The ridge averaged about a chain wide all through. We were in a dilemma now to get across, but having three men with us - one of my brothers and the two formerly mentioned - they took the horse out and led him round the end, and as the ditch had been cut at right angles a little way on either side, they guided the dogcart round the end likewise, when we again went on our way. Only one wheeled vehicle had gone the way before us. At another of these little creeks a great eel was lying in a hole in the middle of the road, which made the horse jump. One of the men killed it and swung it to the axle of the dogcart, much to your father's delight, then four or five years old. Rounding the spur of the hill we came suddenly to Auhuriri, looking so pretty up the valley under the Bush. It was a good dairy station, and there was a fine mob of beautiful cows feeding on the flat below, through which we were now driving comfortably and pleasantly. Round another spur of the hills we had to ascend to get over the saddle, and as discretion is the better part of valour, and the hill very steep, we walked to the top and down the other side. One person was quite enough for the poor horse to drag up and round and down the steep side of a gully. Then we got on to McQueen's Flat and saw the house in the distance, where we had a welcome and hearty tea. We had to leave the dogcart there till we returned (a few days later). I was told to mount the

horse we had driven and ride to the top of the next hill, which I did, but no farther, as I never could ride down-hill. One of the others took your father on the saddle before him, and we reached Mrs Gebbie's in about an hour from McQueen's. It is needless to say she gave us a hearty welcome, and we spent a few days happily with her, returning by the route we came. It should be mentioned that the "Big Swamp" of those days covered (I believe) several thousands of acres of ground. The tall flax was varied with raupo lagoons, some of which were pretty deep. It has long ago been drained into the Halswell River and Lake Ellesmere, and is now smiling homesteads and farms. A few arms of sandhills stretched into the swamp at various places, which would have been misleading to travellers had it not been that the Maoris had used this same sandy ridge as part of their track from the Lake to Kaiapoi; consequently it was beaten and well marked. The winter of 1858 was the mildest, if the wettest, I have experienced in New Zealand. There was no frost. To give you an idea of the state of the road, I may mention that it took half an hour to drive from the end of the lane to the hotel! First one foot of the horse would get stuck in the mud up to the knee, then another; the same with the wheels to the axle. There was only the part from the railway gates to the hotel that had been metalled. At last we gave up going that way, and drove down the riverbank and out by the entrance gate to Wood's mill, which had not been built then. We then made as straight a line to the gully as we could, to take up the formed road and cross the creek by the culvert. On Sundays we walked to Church that way, but instead of holding straight through the park, as we drove, we walked along the top of the ditch bank behind the hedge as far as the

hotel, and joined the road there. One afternoon I was detained rather late in town on business, and it was getting dusk when I started homewards. I was driving myself. I forget who was with me - your father would be one, at any rate. By the time we reached the gully it was pitch dark, and I had just to leave the horse, old "Nimrod", to find his way to the gate at Wood's entrance, which he did as straight as an arrow. The clouds broke a little, and we reached home in safety, but we took care afterwards to leave town earlier. A gentleman died at Hagley Lodge, and a friend came to ask me to allow the funeral to come up the riverbank and past the front door here, to reach the Upper Riccarton Cemetery in safety, by avoiding the worst part of the road. I demurred a little, not liking the idea, but the roads were so impassable they were obliged to come this way. Some friends had called in the forenoon and stayed to dinner. We were all chatting heartily, when suddenly the funeral party appeared at the gate. You may fancy the qualm it sent through us all. A few months after that, during sheep-shearing, a sad affair happened near the sheep station, Homebush, by which my brother George, a fine young man of twenty, was killed by a fall from a horse which he was mounting, and which threw him off and dragged him before he got seated in the saddle. It was a terrible night to me when your Uncle Hugh came down for a doctor, and would not let me go with them. He feared the worst. They met a messenger half-way up, saying it was no use going, as all was over. The doctor and Hugh came back here, but Douglas Graham went on to help Uncle James. Mrs Graham stayed with me. I was very restless with dreading what it might be, and could find no comfort. Suddenly I heard a voice in my ear saying,

"Be still, and know I am God." In the morning I knew all, and He strengthened me then, as ever, for my duties. That sad event weighed heavily on my spirits, dreading its effect on our aged father and mother, and it was nearly a year before I heard how they had sustained the shock, which I believe they received with Christian submission to God's will. This was a great relief to me, but of course the loss of one made changes in our arrangements. I could not much longer have one brother regularly with me. They got a married couple at the sheep station to attend to the domestic duties of one and help to look after the sheep and garden. About this time (1859) Mr Cordy wished to be released from his agreement to manage Homebush cattle station, and it was thought best that Uncle James should be manager there, and Uncle Hugh continue at the sheep station - an arrangement that suited the tastes of both.

It was that same year (1859) that Mr Wood commenced to enquire about a site for the mill, an account of which I have previously written for the benefit of the arbitrators in 1874, who had to fix the rental for a second lease of fourteen years. It will be found among some law papers Uncle James took up to his abode at Homebush at the beginning of May, where he has continued ever since. Mrs Cordy and daughters remained with him in the house for a few weeks, while Mr Cordy and sons made some repairs on the old house at Hororata, where they lived the remainder of their lives, but built a new dwelling-house some years before their deaths, and in which their daughter Ellen still resides. Uncle James got a married couple, intending to continue the dairy with their assistance. It turned out they were very inexperienced. I was summoned in haste to go up and see what was to be done. Every utensil

had been allowed to go sour. They knew little about cleanliness, and nothing of their work. I advised parting with them, and gave James a book on cheese-making, by which he was able to superintend the process himself, afterwards making good cheeses, which sold well. The next couple were not much better, so next season the dairy and cowsheds were moved over to the Selwyn (about a mile below where the bridge is now), and let to a couple. This did pretty well for a time, but the want of paddocks to keep the cows in was a great drawback, as they often wandered back to the hills, and either Uncle James or a stockman had to ride after them and bring them back. I forget how many years this continued; not many. The dairy had to be given up, and the sheds and housing were brought back to Homebush, and a stable erected out of them, the old one having gone to decay. It was built on the same site as the present brick one, which some years later was built right over the top of it. Being green black birch, with the sap in it, it did not last long. I should have mentioned that when Uncle James took possession I had to go up and see Mr Cordy give delivery of the stock. Of course your father was with me (nearly six years old then). I drove Mrs Cordy and him in the old dogcart, in which we sat and saw the muster of cattle on the Selwyn side, between Glentunnel and Coalgate, one day, and those on the other (Waimakariri) side another day. Over five hundred head in each mob. It was a fine sight, and the weather being fine, was very enjoyable.

When left alone in the house again with only your father and my good old servant, Margaret Patrick (who had been with me now about eighteen months), and not being very strong, the strain of loneliness was becoming too great for me, and there was no one

in the place that I could have permanently as a companion, though seldom without someone. Still, the supply was uncertain, and I found it necessary to apply to Mr and Mrs Graham to lock their own doors and sleep in this house when I was alone. They very willingly agreed to this plan, for my health was giving way with anxiety about my father, and having so many business matters attend to. I can never forget the kindness of the Grahams, which they continued to me as long as he lived.

During the year 1858 several new people came to the province, among whom were Mr and Mrs Wilkin, Captain and Mrs McLean, and Dr. Turnbull, all of whom have been true and trusty friends to myself and brothers. The beginning of 1860 I was laid down with an attack of gastric fever, which hung about me for months, and threatened to return about the same time for several years' ill succession afterwards. - It was then Dr. Turnbull commenced his attendance as family physician, which he still continues. I often express a selfish wish that he may outlive me, for he knows my frail constitution so well, I would dread a stranger's prescriptions. He is so kind in his treatment of his patients, few like the thoughts of changing. He treats me like a child of twelve.

When the schools commenced in February, Uncle James took your father to the school in St. Andrew's Church grounds for me, as I had not sufficiently recovered from the fever to take him myself. It was a long way to send him alone at six and a-half years old, so my old gardener, Robert Boyd, who had been a few months here, took him down every morning on a led horse, and Mrs Graham and I went to meet him halfway in the afternoon. At first he only took a sandwich with him, which the other boys frequently

took from him, and he would come home faint with hunger and headache. He had to ride one of the old stock horses at first, but Mr Wilkin kindly got a nice pony for him from Sydney (Jessie), which became very well known. Your father will likely tell you many a tale about her when you are learning to ride.

The mill was commenced to be built in this year. The first addition was also added to St. Andrew's Church, the old part having become too small. The marriage of several of my young friends commenced in this year, and continued through several, to which I always received invitations, and went. Uncle James had an attack of fever in May, and was fortunately down here. He was confined to bed a whole month. The fever had gone through all the people on the station. It was consequent on breaking up the flax land near the house. It was like the swamp fever of hot climates. We had one of the severest snowstorms on the 20th and two following days of May that I have seen in this country. It was very cold, but was very beautiful on the evergreen shrubs, more especially the cabbage trees.

Beginning about the year 1860, and going on about seven years, a marked advance was made by the province. The roads had been much improved, and extended farther into the country. More land was fenced in and improved, and less was to be seen in its natural tussock state. Railways were commenced and opened, more rivers bridged or having better punts. These are looked back upon as the "good old times" when the place was prosperous, and the superintendent (Mr Moorhouse) was at the head of the affairs of the State, with which I don't meddle. You will see it all in the history of the times, which is sure to be written. With better times, people thought of better houses, and either added new rooms to the

old, or built new houses entirely. In either case there was sure to be a house-warming, to which all friends within reasonable distance were invited, and many jolly, hearty gatherings of the kind I have been at. I would like to give you an account of the ways and means by which we went to some of them. Your Uncle James was the only one of the uncles that would go with me, and if he went we took the dogcart, but if he was at the station I had to get someone else, often Mr and Mrs Wilkin, or Mr and Mrs Fraser. I will tell you about one or two. I don't remember which came first. A large party was asked to Casterton, and the easiest and cheapest way was supposed to be to take a drag, and Mr Wilkin would provide the horses. Boyd, my gardener, drove me to Avon Bank (the Wilkins lived there then). We started from there in the drag, but one of the horses, being a young one, thought proper to stick up before we reached Christchurch, where the rest of our party were waiting to be picked up. Every mile or two the same trick was tried on, and when we reached Casterton he refused to mount the hill, so we had to walk up in our gay attire and thin shoes or boots, but fortunately the evening was fine. These affairs were usually arranged so that the guests would arrive with a little moonlight (as carriage lamps were an unknown luxury), but the moon would set, and then everyone had to remain till the first streak of dawn announced the last dance, and then a rush for home. On this occasion the horses behaved better than on the previous night till they were as far as the Acclimatisation Grounds, when the horses absolutely refused to go another step forward. There was no help for it. Out we got, and walked to Avon Bank, leaving Edds' to take the horses back to town. The sun was shining brightly, and we met people on

their way to their day's work. A neighbour, the late Archdeacon and Mrs Mathias, used to go everywhere in a cow cart, not a bullock dray, and they quite enjoyed it. When I had friends staying with me, more than the dogcart could take, I used to have a farm cart or dray, with sacks of straw for seats and straw round our feet, which kept them cosy and warm in cold weather. When the invitation was to a place within walking distance we walked. One christening party I went to at Ilam we played "Aunt Sally" for the first time I had seen it played, and thought it so rough for ladies and gentlemen to play, more like rowdy school-children. There were other games - I forget what - then dinner picnic fashion in the garden on the river bank. Shortly after we all walked across the fields to Coldstream, just built, where we danced. The party was given by Mr and Mrs Watts Russell, of Ilam, and the infant was the first-born of Mr and Mrs Henry Lance. Mr and Mrs Isaac Cookson, who built Coldstream, were friends of the Russells, and gave the room to dance in to save turning out Ilam. The house had not been occupied. As soon as the Cooksons were settled in it, they gave a large house-warming dance, to which I also went, and enjoyed. They were differently managed in those days, not as much rushing to the refreshment rooms as now. There was always a card-room for elderly people who did not dance, and to give a little respite to the musicians and dancers. There were usually gentlemen who would sing now and again. In the short days it was long ere dawn appeared, and no one ever thought of leaving till the first streak was seen. There was a good ball given by the bachelors of the Club in the spring of 1862, to which I went with Uncle James and Aunt Grace, then Miss Lyon. Next day was the first cattle show held for eight or nine

years. It was held in a paddock lent for the day by Mr Justice Gresson, down Armagh Street. We sent a goodly number of exhibits - horses, sheep, cattle and butter - and brought away our own share of the prizes, which we continued to do all along. There was only one year, the second last of our trusteeship, that we returned home prizeless. The following year we had our share. Uncle Alick arrived from Home in January, 1853, and stayed sometimes here, and sometimes at Homebush, working at whatever was to do at either place, and looking out for a situation as manager on a station, which he was almost despairing of when he heard of Mr Bealey's.

If I remember right, I mentioned that I had written an account of the leasing of the piece of ground to Mr Wood for his flour mill, which was built in 1860. As I have written these letters at odd times, I know I must have omitted many things I meant to tell you, but there may be several repetitions. Being so long after, many circumstances have gone from my memory that possibly you might have liked to have known about. I often feel sorry now that I did not keep a diary of passing events. The public ones you will hear of, but many private family ones, which these letters were intended to supply, have faded and gone from my memory. And yet no one has more cause to bless and praise God for His goodness and mercy than I have. Hitherto He has helped me and brought me safely through many sore troubles.

About 1862 or 1863 an important misunderstanding of the terms on which Uncle James and Hugh held the sheep station from Uncle Deans occurred which resulted in their selling out their interest in it to us (the trustees), of which your Uncle Deans did not quite approve, and which was the means of bringing

him to this country to get a proper understanding of the transaction. He gave us the pleasure of a visit from him for three months. He was much interested in the progress of the colony, and returned Home with much enlarged views of the place. It had advanced far beyond his conception. He was a co-trustee with me, and had always been most kind in advising me in difficulties, and continued so to the end, as far as lay in his power, at such a distance. His visit was in the beginning of 1865. The previous May your father caught scarlet fever, which was very virulent, and fatal in many families in the place at that time. I was just recovering from low fever when he was laid down, and had been making arrangements to go to Wellington to be present at Uncle Hugh and Aunt Grace's marriage, but, of course, I had to give up all idea of that. Your Uncle James and Alick went. Uncle James and Hugh had bought Culverden Station with the proceeds of the money they got for the sheep station, and the newly-married uncle and aunt went to live there. They spent a few days with us on their way home, and paid us a visit in the spring, taking us back with them, as we both required a change after our fevers to set us up again. We drove to Leithfield the first day, and stayed the night there to rest the horses; then to Culverden the following day. There were no bridges on any of the rivers after we passed Kaiapoi, but they were all low then. We returned by coach from Hurunui. At the end of December we went south by coach to Ashburton, and crossed the Rakaia by punt. The river was low, but was more difficult to manage than when high, as the punt had to be dragged by bullocks a considerable distance up a shingle spit till we came to deep, wide water in a single stream, when the bullocks were detached, and

the punt drifted down and across the stream to the other side, where another coach was waiting to take the passengers on. From Ashburton, Captain McLean drove us to Buccleuch, where we spent a very pleasant week. Mrs McLean drove us to Winchmore one day to visit your grandpapa and grandmamma Park, who lived there at that time. When we returned home Captain McLean drove us to Rakaia, where we found Uncle James had come to meet us. The river was very high, and all in one stream. A boat came across for us, but the driver of the coach would not go in it with his passengers and the mails, so we had to wait at the side till the boat went over, and the punt was sent for us. It was evening soon after we left Rakaia, but the drive, though hot, was very enjoyable in the moonlight, and we were glad to get home.

After our return from Buccleuch we went to Homebush for a week to get the jam made, and to see that the house was in passable order before Uncle Deans arrived, and had only been home a few days when he landed by the "Mermaid" (Captain Rose), and he went home by the same ship at the end of April. Your mamma can tell you a great deal more than I can about the dangers of crossing the Rakaia before it was bridged, as she had to cross and recross to school at every holiday time. Many lives have been lost in it through people trying to ford it when in flood or rising. At the beginning of May I was sent for hurriedly to go to Culverden, as Aunt Grace was very ill, and had no one to take care of her. Your father and I went by coach from Christchurch about nine o'clock in the morning, reaching the Hurunui about six in the evening. It was pretty dark then, and no moonlight. Uncle Hugh's foreman, George Robertson, was waiting for

us with the buggy ready to start. We had to ford the river in the dusk - a rapid stream, with large boulders, and difficult to find a good landing place. Two dogs had come with their master, and in the middle of the stream nearly led us into trouble, being carried down with the current, and the horses half inclined to follow them. George got us safely landed, and we reached Culverden about nine p.m., very tired. The distance from town is about fifty miles to the Hurunui, and nine more to Culverden - about sixty altogether. It is quite beyond my powers to describe a journey of any distance in one of the old Cobb coaches, especially over rough country and unmade roads, as a great part of them then were. The shaking and bumping were something to be remembered, and were felt for days. On our return the drive as far as the river was most beautiful. We left about six a.m., the dawn just showing the first streaks; then the sunrise on the snowy peaks of Tekoa and surrounding mountains, rose-tinted, was lovely beyond description. On arriving at the river we found it in high flood, and it had not been crossed for some days. We were seen from the accommodation house, and Mrs Hastie's brother came to see if he could bring the punt for us, which he did. It danced about with him, and several times we thought it would either capsize or break the wire rope to which it was attached. He thought he could manage to bring us across, as our additional weight in the punt would steady it. He was right in his conjectures, and we got safely across, when your father remarked that no one dare say now that his mother (your grannie) was a coward. We got into the coach and saw a man sent on before us to try if the water was fordable for the coach. The driver put all the parcels up on the seats. The water came through

at our feet. This is a stream you could step over. The horses pulled well after the guide. Your father and I were the only passengers till we came to Waikari, near the top of the Weka Pass, when I rejoiced to see the well-known bright face of Mr T. McDonald from Horsley Downs (now of Waikuku) waiting for the coach. We were afraid we might have trouble in crossing the Weka Creek, but it had gone down by the time we reached it. The Waipara was high, but fordable, and so was the Kowai. The banks had been considerably washed away, and the difficulty was to find a safe entrance to the stream. The ford is wide, but gets into nasty sandpits after a fresh. However, we got through all right. The Salt Water Creek did not change much, except with the tides, and there was one safe, firm ford across. When we came to the Ashley we found the approaches on the north end of the bridge washed away. There was a boat in readiness to take the passengers across, which, of course, we availed ourselves of. I cannot remember whether the coach forded the river lower down, or whether another was in waiting for us at this side. When we came to Kaiapoi we did not leave the coach while the horses were being changed, as we sometimes did, but sat in it in front of the hotel, in full view of the swing bridge under which the north branch of the Waimakariri, in flood, and within a yard of the bridge, was making such a hissing, gurgling, horrible sound, and thick with mud. I felt so thankful when we were safe on this side, though still dreading the south stream, which was not much swollen, but several of the culverts over little creeks on the island had been carried away, and only temporary ones, not very safe, put in their place. The bridge was good, and after crossing it we came on our way rejoicing without more incidents by the way,

and found Uncle James waiting for us with the dogcart at the Carleton Hotel, our nearest point for getting out, and home. Instead of coming direct we had to go into town to let Dr. and Mrs Turnbull know we would be happy to dine with them next evening, they having been up to invite us. You may be sure we felt thankful to be safe home that night after our day's adventure. Even now, when I think of it, I feel grateful to our good Father in Heaven for His merciful preservation of us through these dangers. The following day we went to spend the afternoon and dine at the Turnbells, who lived down Madras Street then. The wind had been very boisterous all day, and in the evening a heavy snowstorm came on, so bad that the doctor would not allow me to leave, so your father and I stayed, and Uncle James started to come home, bringing Mr Fraser with him as far as the Manse. The night was pitch dark, with blinding snow, so Uncle James stayed there all night and came home in the morning for breakfast, the storm having abated by that time. He returned during the day for us. There were few (if any) lamps in the town then. That was the memorable night in which the ill-fated steamer, "City of Dunedin", was lost in the Straits after leaving Wellington. All on board perished, and no vestige of either ship or passengers was ever found. It was the same steamer that we came from Pigeon Bay in, when she nearly drifted on the rocks during the heavy thunderstorm, and with a large picnic party on board. All that night there were only Mrs Graham (who came to sleep here) and good old Margaret sleeping in this house. In September of this year, 1865, Uncle James had made arrangements with Uncle Alick to take his place at Homebush while he took a trip home to see his father and mother. He went by Melbourne to join

his ship, the "White Star", having promised the captain (Kerr), who was an old school-fellow, that he would go with, him. The ship sprang a leak soon after sailing, and they had to rig tip a pumping machine to keep afloat till they reached Home. We went to Homebush as usual in the holidays, and got the jam made, always taking some friend with us. Then we went to Culverden to visit Uncle Hugh and Aunt Grace. On one of our visits in Uncle Alick's time at Homebush we had Mrs Graham with us, and Robt. Hay, of Pigeon Bay, and a young McDonald from Wellington. We had promised to return by Southbridge to visit Mr and Mrs David McMillan, who were then in charge of Rhudlan, Mr Bealey's property (since sold), and Mr William Graham. Uncle Alick drove Mrs Graham and me, your father and the other two boys riding. About Dunsandel we met Mr D. McMillan coming to tell us Mr Bealey had come up from town, and could not take us all in that night, but if Uncle Alick, Mrs Graham and I would go to Mr Wm. Graham's that night he could put up the boys and could take us next night. We agreed to this arrangement. Next day was Sunday, and we drove to Leeston to Church, when the Rev. Mr Campbell preached, and afterwards returned to the McMillans. On the Monday Mr Graham took Mrs McMillan and all of us for a drive and ride round the country and down to the beach at Little Rakaia. It was a day to remember. We had taken lunch with us, and that was fortunate. No one knew the way except that we could get as far as Taumutu, the Maori Pa. The sand was too loose and heavy for old "Alice" to drag us through. We had all to walk, except Mrs McMillan, who was too delicate at the time. We sank in the sand to the boot tops every step. The horsemen rode on ahead to bring back tidings when the pa was in

sight. It was a weary trudge for hours, with the huge boulders between us and the ocean, with its wonderful rollers on the one hand, and the Little Rakaia lagoons on the other - no outlet till we reached the Pa. To make matters worse, the weather had changed and threatened rain, and what would we do if we could not cross the boggy creek at the pa? We had not provided a present for the Maoris in case we wanted shelter. Fortunately, the creek was passable, and we reached Rhudlan weary, hungry bodies, where we thoroughly enjoyed our tea and rest, returning home next day, after a memorable but enjoyable visit.

On reconsidering, I find I have placed the memorable visit to Southbridge and Rakaia beach a year too soon. It ought to have been the end of 1866, instead of the beginning of it, and the visit to Homebush with my good old friend Mrs McDonald should have been described. Uncle Alick was in charge both times. It was a very hot summer, and we often took our tea on the verandah rather than inside, to get more fresh air. Mrs McDonald was delighted with her visit. We had the usual fruit picking and jam making. The two Wilkins (now Mr) James and David Ann (now Mrs E. Cox) were also with us. One night we were very full. Mrs McDonald, D. Ann and myself, all in Uncle James's room, where there were then two stretchers, which my visitors had, and I had the old dogcart cushions for my bed on the floor, a stranger being on the sofa in the parlour. We went a picnic to the Gorge Hill one day to show Mrs McDonald the wild beauties of the river there. It was blowing a stiff nor'-wester while there, and looking down on the river over the top of the bush, the view was more appalling than pleasant, the river being swollen and very muddy, and crawling so

serpent-like under the bush as if trying to undermine us and suck us all in. I will never forget that scene, and the terror of my old friend, even though Uncle Alick held her to prevent her falling over. A month later, in February, 1866, we went up to Wellington together with Mrs Kenny, Aunt Grace's sister, in the S.S. "Wellington", one of the new and best boats of that time. We had a fine passage, but oh! the sickness. We spent a month there very pleasantly, having several mutual friends, and meeting frequently at their houses, for Wellington people are very hospitable. My visit was to my good friends Mr and Mrs Lyon. We, your father and I, returned in the old "Lord Ashley". A twenty-four hours' passage, very very sick. Uncle Alick came to Lyttelton to meet us. Your father still continued sick, and we had to take him between us, our hands under his arms to rush up the hill with him to catch the mail-cart at the foot on this side to bring us to the train at Heathcote Ferry. From the top of the hill your uncle rushed down to stop the cart for us. We had your Grandfather Park on board as a passenger, and your father was in the same cabin with him, which I was glad of, as he knew him, and I was too ill to look after him. He jumped off the steamer immediately it touched the wharf, but we were too ill to hurry, and could not get off till a mob of horses were landed. It was too bad. Shortly after our return our friends, Mr and Mrs Wilkin and family, with Mrs Fraser, of the Manse, sailed for home in the "Mermaid". We went into Lyttelton to see them off, and after leaving, the ship being half across the bay and the sea calm, we rowed over to Diamond Harbour to visit Mr and Mrs Stoddart, who lived there then. They were delighted to see us. We dined with them on a beautiful conger eel. Then they

showed us all over their famous fruit garden and orchard. It was a treat to see such well-kept trees, laden with apples and pears nearly ripe. On our return to port we stayed with our friends, the Rev. Mr and Mrs Gow, for a few, days, who also showed us much kindness. Their sons were at the Christchurch High School with your father. About the beginning of April we took a run up to Culverden for a few days, your Uncle Hugh and Aunt Grace returning with us and driving us down. You see we did lots of travelling about in those days, seeing the country and visiting friend after friend, who are now gone.

Since writing my last sheet we have entered on a new year - 1890 -the jubilee of the colonisation of New Zealand. The event has been celebrated by the different provinces in different ways, all of which you will find described in the public prints, so that I will confine myself entirely to personal or family matters. You will find statistics of the progress and prosperity of the colony in the printed papers sufficient to make the dullest mind see that the good hand of God has been over us protecting us from enemies, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Therefore it is fitting that special notice should be taken of the time. Fifty years old. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." - Ebenezer. In His name will we trust and not be afraid. Had your father's uncle, Mr William Deans, lived, he was one of the first colonists to arrive at Wellington in the ship "Aurora", the first of the first four ships with colonists. Your Grandpapa Park arrived a few weeks earlier in a pioneer survey ship. I must now return to home affairs. It was in the spring of 1865 that I had the island planted to give more shelter to the field in front, and also to beautify

the property. The ground was shaped like the shadow of a tree, so the idea struck me that I should carry out the idea and plant it as such, and to represent the history of Canterbury, so I made the narrow end the root and planted it with Scotch and other firs and pines, and evergreens, as the so-called prehistoric settlers (those who were here before 1850). A straight trunk was planted with bluegums: these were to stand for the runholders and Australians to give backbone to the branches which were planted with oaks, elms, ashes and sycamores as the farmers and other settlers, and some ornamental trees and shrubs round and round to represent the professional and other ornamental people. I wanted to get masses of the different colours together, and partially succeeded. It was very pretty when young. The Duke of Edinburgh admired it in 1869, when four years planted. A great many of the oaks and other trees in the Bush were planted in that and following seasons. In 1867 the drive plantation was made, which I meant to be my masterpiece in the art of planting, and to be my memorial as a Scotswoman. You will say: "The vanity of our grandmother." Never mind, I know some children who like to play in it, and several Sunday School treats have been much enjoyed in it. It cost me a great deal of thought and many sleepless hours at night how to manage to bring out the colouring of checks of tartan with trees to make them blend. This I did by lines of sycamores, elms, ashes, and silver birches crossing each other and filling in the squares between the lines with nine oaks, all meant to give place, in time, to the centre one; but that idea has not been quite carried out in the various thinnings of the trees. Then I had to be patriotic, and unite my native with my adopted country, or, rather, join

Great Britain with Australasia. This I did with a ribbon border of firs, pines, and silver birches, to represent the old country, and the gums and wattles made another ribbon border running along another side. The ground was nearly triangular. Those two borders met at the corner in a Union Jack of Scotch firs for the blue field, silver birches for the St. Andrew's Cross, oaks and elms for the St. George and St. Patrick's Crosses. Then, to be very loyal to the throne or Heir Apparent, I had to run an imaginary line from that corner up in an angle through the centre to a clump of pines for the centre feather in the Prince of Wales Plume, the two outer ones being at the ends of the two ribbon borders. The outer borders on each side of the drive were lines representing Europe, and the whole to say "such is life with its lights and shades." It was very beautiful when young, especially in the autumn, when the various tints came out in strong relief against the gums and pines in the background. The attention of travellers on the north train was often attracted by the blaze of colouring, the poplars and shrubs adding to the variety. The Duke of Edinburgh opened the drive. The outer border of the drive looked very grand and stately when four or five years old, with gums and tall poplars, Scotch firs and silver birches for a background, and limes in front, and shrubs to give a finish to it. Unfortunately, the gums robbed the other trees of their sustenance, and had to be taken out with the poplars. They also made the drive too shady in winter, and kept it damp. Of late years a blight has attacked the Scotch and other firs, killing them, they have also had to give way, leaving the limes and a few birches as sole occupiers of the ground, and at present they look sickly. I am passionately fond of planting, and

often have I wished I could tackle the Homebush Hills, to take the barren look off them. Uncle James had done a great deal in that way, and they look very different from five and thirty years ago.

I must go back to our return from Culverden in the beginning of 1867. The painters had been doing the outside of the house during our absence, but we found the kitchen chimney much cracked and requiring to be pulled down. We had to take the tradesmen when we could get them. It happened that the Governor, Sir George Grey, had come to Christchurch on a visit, and it was announced in the Friday's paper (the only notice given us) that he was to pay a visit here on Monday afternoon to see how the trees were growing that he had presented to your grandfather and his brother. There was neither a carpet on a floor nor a blind in a window. A lady came on the Saturday to see the supposed great preparations I would be making. She saw the house as I have described, but I did not tell her I had arranged with a man to be here at six o'clock on Monday morning to lay the drawing-room carpet and put up the blinds on the lower windows which could be drawn down. He came to the hour, and had everything done by midday. The other tradesmen came also, and the end of the passage having been taken out to build the pantry as a lean-to, and the whole open to the kitchen, I had to hang up a tarpaulin at the foot of the stairs to shut out the dust from the bricks from the falling chimney. It did not look very picturesque, but I had nothing better. A few words explained matters. The Governor, with his private secretary, Mr Moorhouse, superintendent at that time, and Mr Weld (now Sir F. Weld) all drove up to the end of the Bush and walked round the back way, just as the men finished pulling down the

chimney, and had gone the river in front to wash themselves. I had to order them elsewhere.

The Governor and party enjoyed the stroll round. I took them down to see the old house, where your grandfather and brother lived when Sir G. Grey last visited Canterbury, and where he stayed a night or two with them (with Lady Grey). Mr and Mrs Douglas Graham made them welcome, and they admired the state of preservation in which they found the old house. The carriage was waiting for them there, as that was the only approach to this house then, and not pleasant. They left for Mr Wood's mill, taking your father with them, as he had acted the host so well, helping them to wine or fruit as they chose. They approved of the mill, and Sir George sent back a message that Mr Wood had a prettier place than this. I had no gardener at the time, and the paths were very untidy.

In the beginning of 1868 Uncle James returned from his visit to Britain by the ship "Mermaid" (Captain Rose), and had Mrs Fraser, of the Manse, and Mr Wason as fellow-passengers. As Uncle Alick was in charge at Homebush, I thought it would be better for Uncle James to pay a visit to Uncle Hugh and Aunt Grace at Culverden before resuming his duties at Homebush, and as a fortnight of your father's school holidays had still to run, off we three went to spend that time there. The new house was just a building, and the old one was not very comfortable, and pretty full, Mrs Lyon being there before us. The weather was fine, so we proposed to visit Mr and Mrs Caverhill at Hawkswood. Uncle Hugh had business at Waiau. He rode, and Uncle James drove Mrs Lyon, Aunt Grace and myself and your father as far as the river, where we came to a full-stop. The weather had been hot, and the snows had melted;

the rivers had been high, and were still too high to ford. It was falling fast, so we waited an hour or two by the banks, but it fell too slowly to be safe to risk crossing. There was nothing for it but to retrace our steps home again. The Accommodation House was on the other side of the river, where we had hoped to lunch and proceed on our journey the remaining sixteen miles (we had gone about fourteen). We arrived, tired and very hungry. That was remembered as the "hungry picnic", for many a day. Having taken nothing with us, and never thinking of the river, our visit to Hawkswood had to be given up till another opportunity the following summer. On our return home to Riccarton we found a distinguished visitor had arrived in Christchurch, namely, Lord Lyttelton, one of the chief promoters of the Canterbury Settlement, and to whose honour a public breakfast was about to be given by the Pilgrims of the first four ships, and to which Your father (though only 15) and I were invited, and went with Mr Caverhill, who had come down country on business. All the "pre-Adamite" settlers were invited to join also - that is, those people who had arrived and settled before the arrival of the "First Four" ships whose passengers were known as the "Pilgrim", Settlers. The banquet was given in the old Town Hall, afterwards pulled down, and Strange's shop now occupies its place. The table ran along the wall, and the principal people sat with their backs to the wall looking towards the three smaller tables attached to it like three legs, at the centre of which Dr. Barker, who invited us, did us the honour to place us, being nearest the principal guests. Your father distinguished himself by passing a bottle of wine to, Mr Caverhill, unasked, to drink a toast, and caused a smile all round our table. Of course, there

were lots of speeches, which you may come across some day in some old newspaper of that date if you are inclined that way. I had to get a bonnet for the affair. I wore a black silk gown and a pretty light grey mantle and white bonnet, and was very grand, of course. Lord Lyttelton was a fine-looking man, though not tall. He had a very intellectual head and countenance. He sat on Mr Moorhouse's right hand, he being Superintendent of Canterbury then.

The 4th of February, 1868, was a memorable day in the annals of Christchurch. It had been predicted some years previously that Christchurch was in great danger should the river Waimakariri overflow its banks, which it threatened to do. Mr Bray's warnings were either unheeded or laughed at till, on the 25th of December, 1865, it did actually overflow, and come into both the Waimairi and Waipara, branches of the Avon, as well as the Styx. This alarmed the people, but there was little done to prevent a repetition till the greater flood of 1868 came down. You must see the accounts of that one in the public newspapers, for at that time all the big and snow rivers in Canterbury overflowed their banks and laid all the low-lying grounds under water for days. It entered many houses, and was several feet deep in some of the streets in Christchurch. Boats were seen plying from Hereford Street junction with Oxford Terrace right down the banks of the river, and up Colombo Street as far as Gloucester Street corner. This stream was not affected except by the muddy water backing up to the dam from the stream below. There were many narrow escapes, but I don't remember any fatalities occurring. It alarmed the country sufficiently to see the danger of recurrences, and as speedily as possible protective works were carried out along the southern bank of

the Waimakariri which as yet have done good service. I should have mentioned, when telling you of our waiting at the Waiau for the flood to abate, that we were seen by the Accommodation House keepers, who sent a man with a couple of strong horses accustomed to the river to take us through, but though the rider tried several places for a ford, the wise horses decidedly refused to venture in, thereby preventing what might have been the loss of all our lives. This was another cause for thankfulness to God Who had endued these dumb creatures with instinct and wisdom to refuse to enter the flooded river. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." "Bless the Lord, O my soul my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who redeemeth thy life from destruction and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies."

When Uncle James returned to Homebush to take up his duties again Uncle Alick would have been idle had not Mr and Mrs Douglas Graham resolved to take a trip to Melbourne to visit some friends there when they had the opportunity of getting Uncle Alick to take charge of the farm here during their absence. We were quite pleased to have his company in the house here with us during their absence. I think I omitted to mention that Mr Wason came with Uncle James from Scotland, and after Mr and Mrs Graham returned from Melbourne, Mr Wason and Uncle Alick took a nice tour round the North Island, going up the east coast and down by the west. Both were looking for something to do, the one an investment, the other a managership. Both had to return to Canterbury and wait for over a year, when Mr Wason bought Corwar on the Rakaia, and Uncle Alick went to Haldon to manage for Mr Bealey, late Superintendent of Canterbury.

During the spring and summer following (1869) we were all busy preparing for a bazaar to clear off some debts on St. Andrew's Church, and even during our usual holiday trips carried work with us to prepare for it. Of course we went our usual summer trip to Homebush and got the jam made; then we set off to Culverden - your father and Uncle Alick and myself. This time we made a second attempt, in which we succeeded, to reach Hawkswood to visit our old kind friends, Mr and Mrs Caverhill. We three, accompanied by Uncle Hugh and Mr Wilkin, had a most enjoyable day's travelling, the weather being perfect, and after crossing the Waiauau, which we forded, your father, Uncle Hugh and myself in his buggy, Mr Wilkin and Uncle Alick on horseback, and getting in among the hills and over them (for some of them we had really to mount by a very perpendicular track), the same remark applying to the cuttings of the tracks to get over the streams which we had to cross and recross, some of them a dozen times. Mr Caverhill had sent his spring trap to the River Waiauau to meet us, thinking it stronger than Uncle Hugh's for the rough places, in some of which both horses and trap had to slip down terraces as high as a table with very little incline. The hills and valleys among them looked very barren till we came nearer Hawkswood, when all the deep gullies were densely wooded with large timber trees, and the drive through those cuttings was delightful, having more gentle slopes. When we arrived you may be sure we were tired enough and ready for a hearty tea, though we had taken sandwiches with us. After tea and a rest we took a stroll with Mr and Mrs Caverhill round the garden and orchard, famous in those days, and the impression made upon me was like to the Queen of Sheba when she went to visit King

Solomon, the half of its grandeur and beauty had not been told me. The garden was on the edge of a deep gully, thickly wooded with timber trees, evergreens, creepers and ferns, and at the time was bright with flowers, and the fruit trees were laden with fruits of all descriptions grown in this climate. The lower end - for it was on a gentle slope - was protected by a plantation of European and Australian trees, which protected it against the nor'-westers. We spent nearly a week, which we enjoyed exceedingly. One drive we had was to the Amuri Bluff down on the beach, where we picnicked after crossing the river Conway (a bend of which is visible from the drawing-room windows) about twenty times. The hills, or rather mountains, come down to the very stream on both sides so steep, it is impossible to make a road along them, and the only way is to drive down the riverbed. This we had to do, down several streams going to Hawkswood, and after floods the entrance to the riverbeds is often washed away, and new cuttings have to be made. Mr Wilkin and Uncle Hugh only stayed one night, as they went on business. Mr Caverhill sent his man and horses used to the hills and cuttings as far as the Waiauau with us, when we returned. It was flooded, so we crossed in the punt and found Uncle Hugh's trap waiting for us at this side.

We reached Culverden early, but very tired and hungry, though we had plenty of sandwiches to eat by the way. When we got home again the bazaar work occupied all our time till the beginning of April, when it came off with great success in the old Town Hall, where Strange's fine buildings now stand. Mrs Fraser was in very delicate health ever since her return from her Home visit, and died at the beginning of February. She had done many pretty

things for the bazaar on her deathbed, and another friend took up her stall and work. Mrs Wilkin, Mrs Graham and myself had another stall. I forget how many there were, but it was a great success and everyone was pleased. We had two days of it, and a third in prospect, when at nine on the second night we were told we must have everything cleared out in two hours, as the hall was wanted next day. We had to bundle the things unsold together, cart them home, and down again next day to be sold by auction in the hall in High Street, where everything was disposed of.

There was a week to rest after the fatigues of the bazaar, when, on the following Monday, the late Colonel and Mrs Packe called early in the forenoon to request a paddock for the special entertainment of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh (our good Queen's second son), who wished to have a day's private pigeon shooting when he should arrive at the end of the week. I went out with Colonel and Mrs Packe to choose a convenient, quiet place, which we found in the large field above the Bush, a few chains above and west of the bridge above the island, which had been planted four years previously, and was looking very pretty, fresh and green. The Duke arrived at the Christchurch railway station about midday on Thursday, the 22nd of April, where a coach and six beautiful black horses were waiting to take him in procession around the town. Of course, your father and three uncles, and Mr and Mrs Douglas Graham were there with me, and the old dogcart (my State coach), not to mention the crowds of people from far and near to do honour to our Queen's son. We did not follow in the procession, but struck off to meet it at the corner of Oxford Terrace and Worcester Street, where it was to stop at the Clarendon, where his

Royal Highness was to stay, and where we got a splendid view of him. At the railway station the Volunteers were firing a Royal Salute of welcome, but the horses would not stand it, and H.R.H. gave orders to cease firing for fear of an accident in such a crowd of people, which was thought very considerate on his part. When we had seen them landed at the Clarendon we came home for a short rest, and then off again in response to an invitation from Mr Anderson, of the Foundry, who gave the Prince a princely luncheon. (Being Mayor that year, and the other councillors declining to join in the expense, he said he would do it himself rather than have the disgrace of inhospitality attached to the city). Five hundred gentlemen sat down to lunch with him in the old Town Hall (where Strange's fine buildings now stand). Uncle James had an invitation to luncheon, which he accepted to represent this family, as your father was not old enough then, and I had a ticket from Mrs Anderson for the ladies' gallery to see them "feed". I think about twenty or thirty ladies went, and we had the pleasure of looking down on the tables loaded with every delicacy. I forget the number of tables and the number of peacocks dressed with their tails, and looking so imposing. We ladies had the pleasure of being attended to by the Prince, who requested the waiter to send us up a plate of biscuits. After luncheon, Sir Cracroft Wilson had horses in readiness, and took the Prince and escort a ride past Cashmere to the top of the hills above, to give him a good idea of the Plains. On Friday, there were races in his honour, which, of course, I did not attend, but James and I went to the ball in the Provincial Council Chambers in the evening. Your father, being in the High School Cadet Corps, joined in the

procession the day before, and that evening acted as a "guard of honour" at the drillshed, where a children's entertainment was going on. Your Uncle George Park did the same at the ball.

I had been busy at home all day preparing for a luncheon party here on Saturday to witness the pigeon shooting match, and was very tired. My head-dress did not please Uncle James, and it was all to take to pieces when I went to dress. It was composed of white lace and convolvulus flowers, which looked too conspicuous. There was nothing I could think of but heather as a substitute, so Uncle Alick went out with a candle to search for the freshest sprays, the season being almost over. Fortunately there was a girl in the house (a nurse of Aunt Grace's, who I was staying here with Aggie and Eddie while their mother was in Wellington), who, put it together for me, and it was much admired. My dress was a rich corded black silk. I danced the opening quadrille with Mr Wason, and went into supper with the late Mr Duncan, solicitor. The supper was laid under a tent on the lawn, where a fountain played all the time, most delightfully perfumed with various scents. I danced a great many dances, and got home at five in the morning, thoroughly tired.

I omitted to mention that Sir Cracroft Wilson and I had been asked for a bullock each to roast whole in Hagley Park on the Thursday, which we complied with, to feed the crowds. I had breakfast in bed on Saturday morning, and felt inclined to remain there all day. I expected about thirty old friends to lunch at half-past twelve, and having only the old parlour (now your father's business room or study), I had to take them in relays, My dinner service was very short, and I had bespoken a set from town for the

occasion, but as it had been required for the various feasts the previous night, I did not get it till after eleven, and every piece was dirty, just as it had been used. Dr. Turnbull very kindly and thoughtfully sent up his groom to assist me, as he could both lay the table (the round one) and wait. The sideboard was in that room then, too, and it was covered as well, and they were said to look very pretty, both of them. My guests were very kind and indulgent with me, and took the hearty welcome and will for the deed, so often with me, and I am sure then, as at other times, for which I owe them grateful thanks. As one set finished lunch, they made room for another, the last just finishing as the cavalcade approached, the first ones scattered about the lawn making the place look gay, and where they got a fine view of the Prince as he drove past in a large brake with the six black horses in hand, his first attempt at driving six-in-hand. Mrs Packe, Mrs Anderson, and I were standing on the verandah when he passed, and he drew rein slightly to give us a salute. We had to make preparations for the Prince to open the drive which had been planted two years before, but the gateway had to be made in the fence from the lawn, and a cabbage tree planted at each side. The gates were all thrown open, but a mounted constable kept guard at each, which made us feel very grand. Two cavalry officers rode in front of the brake containing the Prince, and escort, about twenty or more gentlemen, members of the Club. Their friends were admitted by ticket at the gate at the end of the Bush, and their horses and carriages were put inside my little paddock. Of course, my friends were admitted from here. I followed them after arranging for teacups and saucers, etc., to be sent up to the field for afternoon tea for the ladies of the party. It was no

easy task, for I was so tired, and my domestics had lost their heads with excitement. I had to drive on to the grounds, though against the rule, but the gentlemen did not interfere when they saw who I was. Mr Rolleston was superintendent then, and he introduced me to the then Governor, Sir George Bowen, who praised the place very much, and would have introduced me to the Prince but I did not want a scene on the grounds. Everything went off without a hitch, and the Prince sent me such kind thanks (through Colonel Packe) for the great pleasure he had enjoyed, and was so pleased with the place that he wished he could spend two or three days here in quiet. Of course, I wished I could have offered some better sport, such as pheasant shooting. You may be sure I was very thankful when it was safely over. One lady nearly fainted at seeing a pigeon shot dead. (It was considered a cruel sport, and put a stop to some years after). Colonel Packe beat the Prince at one match for half a sovereign, which he received from him, and showed me the money, which he afterwards invested in the "Cruise of the Galatea" (the Prince's ship), which he gave to your father in remembrance of the day (the 24th of April, 1869). The Prince sent in his whip to show us - a present from the Australians, very handsomely mounted in silver. I got back to the house before he passed, when he half pulled up again and bowed his acknowledgments. He told Colonel Packe if he had known I was on the ground he would have thanked me in person. It would have been too much for me. Now, my dear children, you may imagine how deeply I felt the honour done this "House of Riccarton" by the Prince's visit through the gentlemen of the Club, few of whom I knew intimately, but I felt that they had not then forgotten the benefits the early settlers

had received from the hands of your grandfather and his brother William. Neither they yet forget (January, 1891), for at the meeting of Scientists last week their names were honourably mentioned by Dr. Hocken, of Dunedin, in his address. For myself, I felt the honour conferred on me for remaining neutral from the first arrival here. The Prince could not have been taken elsewhere without rousing jealousy. No one was jealous of me, for I never entered into rivalry with any, but tried to be friendly and civil with whoever was the same towards me. There were many little incidents happened at that time I should like to have noted, but it would tire you. I will try and relate a few briefly. Your Aunt Grace had gone to visit her parents in Wellington, taking Jamie with her. In a joking way I sent my compliments to the Prince asking him to tea and to open the new drive, little thinking how the ideal would be realised. Your father had bagged me to offer the field in front for a review of the Volunteers. Neither of these suggestions was known to the gentlemen of the Club. When Colonel and Mrs Packe came to request the use of the field, I was trying to save Edie McLraith from choking with a piece of apple that had gone the wrong way. She was getting black in the face, but the nurse (Cathrine McLeod) in charge of Aggie and Edie (then eight months old) got her finger down her throat to turn the piece of apple so that she could breathe. Even after returning from choosing the spot she was so far gone I thought she would surely die in our hands, and neither her father nor mother was within reach. I gave her a spoonful of salad oil, which made her sick, and she got rid of the apple. You may be sure we had a fright. At the end of the lunch on Saturday, as the party were waiting for the arrival of the Prince and escort, Uncle Hugh arrived with Aunt

Grace and Jamie and Mrs Kenny, very sick, from the steamer. A cup of tea refreshed them and they were ready to accompany me to the grounds to see the pigeon shooting. It was Uncle Alick who drove me, with Mrs Graham and Uncle James, to see the arrival at the railway station. The old mare (Alice Grey) did splendidly in the crowd and during the firing; Uncle Alick was quite proud of her. Your father had not been brought up in court or camp, and knew little of military discipline, so took his favourite old dog, "Beecher", to see the shooting, and when the first bird dropped Beecher thought proper to retrieve it. Fortunately the dog was known to Colonel Packe, who came between your father and the displeasure of the gentlemen. I trembled lest your father (then nearly sixteen years old) should have been sent from the field in disgrace, which would have been dreadful to me.

On Sunday morning, though very tired, I went to Church to worship the God of my fathers, who had bestowed such honour upon our family as to bring us into the presence of our Queen's son. Truly He is a God that rewards the humble who put their trust in Him. Hitherto has He helped and upheld us. Ebenezer! Help us, O God, for we trust in Thee.

The excitement caused by the visit of Prince Albert, Duke of Edinburgh, had scarcely subsided when we had another visitation of a very different character. On the 3rd or 5th of June, 1869 (I write from memory, not from notes, and may not be always accurate as to the exact date), we were visited by one of the most severe earthquakes experienced here by Europeans. It came, as they usually do, without warning. A loud report like a cannon ball hitting the house, then a long rumbling noise like a long, heavy train passing over a wooden bridge, shaking

violently, all the time. I cannot remember how long the shock lasted - not a great length of time, perhaps a minute, but it seemed interminable. Coming, as it did, about eight in the morning, and not being very strong at the time, I was still in bed, but tried to jump up at the first notice. That, however, was impossible.

The sick, faint feeling and violent shaking compelled me to lie down again, then the feeling that every moment the roof was coming down on me was something dreadful. It must have been akin to that described in Scripture, where the wicked are described as calling on the hills and mountains and rocks to cover them in the day of judgment. In that great and dreadful day, may we, and all who are dear to us, be found hidden in the Rock of Ages, the Eternal Son of God, Who has died for us, to pay the penalty of our guilt, and, having paid the penalty, He will not withhold from us the gift of His Holy Spirit of promise to dwell in us, and purify our thoughts, speech, and behaviour, and fit us for His presence in glory when He shall call us hence. "Lord, keep us, for we trust in Thee", so that we need not fear to obey the call when He sends it. The shocks continued to come and go for about two months. The first was the heaviest, though some of the others were almost as alarming, being quick and sharp. On the last evening of August, the following year, 1870, we had another very similar in character to the first shock of those just mentioned, but being downstairs, I made a rush for the door. Your father caught my arm to prevent my going outside, as my health was not robust, so I stood with the handle of the front door in my hand, swaying backward and forward with the motion like a branch of a tree in a storm. On going into the kitchen when the shock was over, I found

my good old Jane and the groom still fixed to their seats at table, where they had just finished their tea. The hams hanging from the ceiling swayed backward and forward for a quarter of an hour.

In the summer of 1869 to 1870 we took our usual holiday trips to Homebush and Culverden, and operations at each place were progressing Uncle Alick went to Haldon in the spring of 1870, and still continues to manage for Mr Bealey. Towards the end of the year Dr. Haast (later Sir Julius von Haast) went to the Malvern district geologising and exploring for coal or any other minerals, and it was then that Uncle James, who was out with him, made the discovery of the coal seam in Surveyor's Gully (now Glentunnel). When we returned from Culverden, at the end January, 1871, Uncle Hugh and Aunt Grace drove down with us, brining Edie and Willie (the baby), and after a day's rest here we drove to Homebush to inspect the new discovery, taking Edie with us and leaving Willie in charge of Jane and nurse. The late Mr James Wilkin and your father accompanied us on horseback. We went unexpected, and had not taken much lunch with us, thinking we would get a good tea on our arrival about 4 p.m. Uncle James was out, and would not be in till 7. It was in Mrs Sam Price's days. She was busy scrubbing the kitchen when we arrived, so the easiest way for her was to let us know decidedly that we could have nothing till the master came in at 7p.m. After breakfast next morning we all started off to see the coal seam, driving as far up the West side of the creek as it was possible to go; then, between walking and riding, we reached the gully and went down into it to view the black mass. We had taken sandwiches and sherry with us and drank success to the coal discovery. Then there was some digging of

coal to bring a sack with us. That had to be carried on Mr Wilkin's pony, "Blanket". Your father had to take Edie on his pony, "Dinah". The others walked to the buggy. Before reaching home we were drenched with a tremendous hailstorm. It has escaped my memory whether I mentioned that I had intended taking your father home to finish his education and travel in the old countries, but when he was about fifteen or sixteen my own health was so delicate that, acting on the advice of my father and brother-in law, Mr Deans, I held a consultation with Drs. Barker and Turnbull, who both unhesitatingly dissuaded me from doing so, both on my own and your father's account. Under these circumstances he completed his school education at the old High School, Christchurch, in December, 1869, under the tutorship of the Revs. C. Fraser and J. Campbell. In February, 1870, your father entered the office of the late Messrs Duncan and Jameson, solicitors, as articled clerk for five years, where he acquired a general knowledge of business to fit him for the duties of his station in after life. He left the office eighteen months before he came of age, so as to get a firmer grasp of the knowledge required for conducting his private affairs, being one year short of articled time, and received a gold watch from Messrs Duncan and Jameson on his resigning his seat in their office, as a mark of their satisfaction with his attention to their business. After the discovery of the coal seam at Glentunnel, and securing of the sections known to contain it, an unforeseen difference arose in getting to it for profitable working. Another section belonging to a stranger came between ours and the road, and as he would not allow us a road through it on the flat, and the surveyor's road was laid off right over the high

hills, and useless, there was no other way to reach the seams than by making a tunnel under the road over the hill tops. Hence the name of "Glentunnel". Some years afterwards the opposing section came into your father's hands, and he and Uncle James immediately laid the tramway through it, instead of the tunnel, in case of accidents. It was your Uncle James who proposed making the tunnel, and carried out the idea under Mr Bray's instructions. The news that the hole was through was brought down a few days before your father came of age, on 6th August, 1874. The labour was done by Williams, of the Coal Depot, Christchurch, and Tom Brown, Glentunnel. I have anticipated considerably, so must retrace my steps back a year or two.

From the visit to Homebush in 1871, I was not strong enough to risk the fatigue of the journey till the spring of 1874, so that many of my pleasant visits to friends had to be discontinued. The years 1870 and 1871 made great havoc in the ranks of my old friends, of whom were old Mrs McDonald, your mamma's father, Mr Park, old Mr Johnston (who built this house), Mr Davy (chief surveyor, who showed me great kindness when I required to go to the Government Buildings on business with Mr Brittan, my co-trustee; Mr Davy allowed me to sit in his room by the fire till Mr Brittan arrived), old Mrs McLean (of the Waimakariri), and Mrs Lyon, of Wellington (Aunt Grace's mother), who had been like a sister to me. At the end of that year Mrs Graham was very ill, and the day the Sunday School treat was given here we thought her dying. She rallied in February and went to Mr and Mrs McMillan, near Waddington, for a change. Her husband went to meet her at Homebush, and after visiting the coal seams they left the following day for his brother's

(Wm. Graham, Southbridge), in company with Mr and Mrs McMillan, who drove Mr and Mrs Graham, Mr Graham leading his horse behind. Something startled the animal, and he pulled back, tearing the flesh off Douglas Graham's little finger. Instead of going on they returned to Christchurch, to have the finger dressed, when it was found necessary to amputate it. He was put under chloroform by his own consent, Drs. Powell and Turnbull attending him. Before applying the knife to the finger the heart ceased to beat, and Douglas Graham was no more. The Rev. Mr Fraser brought Mrs Graham home to me at midnight, after all was over, and such a night as that Saturday, 9th March, 1872, I shall never forget, nor hope to see another similar. Poor Mrs Graham, in her weak health, I thought she would surely lose her reason; her pitiful cries and moans calling on him to come to her were heartrending. Of course, Mr Graham's death threw us into a little perplexity as to the best course to be followed, seeing two and a-half years remained to elapse ere your father came of age. There was great depression in farming lines at that time, and we had almost entirely given up cultivation at Riccarton, so Uncle James came to the rescue and volunteered to manage both Homebush and Riccarton for the time being, my health not being robust enough at that time to look after everything properly, and it was not worth while engaging another manager. The trouble of initiating him into the regular routine would have been more than his services were worth, so we just worked away quietly, not cultivating more than necessary for the supply of the place, but contenting ourselves with grazing and fattening sheep and cattle from Homebush. James Webster was overseer here. Your father continued at Mr Duncan's office for

another two years, when he left before the expiry of his articulated time in order to make himself more thoroughly acquainted with the business of his after life. The experience and insight he gained in the office have been of great use to him, giving him a knowledge of general business and how to conduct it. Mrs Graham stayed with me for about three months after her husband's death. She was dreadfully broken down in health and spirits. I don't think during all that time anyone could mention her husband's name in her presence without calling forth a flood of tears. Her brother Matthew then took her for a few months to his home and family, and afterwards her brother Robert, at Prebbleton, till their own dwelling-house was erected at Springbank, where she resided till about two months ago (8th September, 1891), when she passed away to her rest, after years of great pain and suffering, nineteen and a-half years after her beloved and lamented husband. (Since her death your dear grandmamma, Mrs Park, has also entered her rest, after a few months' illness, but I am anticipating). I must return to the years 1873 and 1874. The former of these was spent much as usual, looking forward, sometimes with hope, not unmingled with fear lest any other untoward event should occur before delivering up our charge, and giving an account of our trusteeship to your father, the heir. He dealt very leniently with us, overlooking our many mistakes and shortcomings, knowing the difficulties we had had to contend with, not the least being a lawsuit in connection with Mr Wood's mill dam. We had to act on the defensive not only in that case, but in every conceivable way in which we could be attacked. Boundary fences to defend, road water to reject, with many other etceteras, besides innumerable battles to

fight for Homebush. They are all past and forgiven, though not forgotten. I did not mean to trouble you with them in this, as I only meant it to be a retrospect of the progress of the place and manners of life of the good old times, but, above all, as an acknowledgment of the Good Hand of our God upon us, delivering us out of all our worldly troubles in connection with our trusteeship, to Whom be all glory and praise. Amen. Ebenezer. Little did I think what I was undertaking when your grandfather gave me my choice of remaining here, or returning to Scotland after his death. He delivered me over to his Heavenly Father's care, and surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my life long. The satisfaction it gave your grandfather when I decided promptly to remain here was sufficient to inspire me with energy to endeavour to do my best, and I have never regretted the decision I made. I am now nearing the promised span of life, and looking forward to meeting him with Christ in glory.

As the term of our trusteeship drew to a close, we became most anxious that my brother-in-law, Mr Deans, should be induced to pay us another visit, to see the affairs of the estate settled up and delivered over to your father, and also as his father's only remaining brother, to see his nephew (your father) installed as proprietor of Riccarton, inherited from his father, and of Homebush, secured for him by his trustees. Accordingly, Mr Deans was written to on the subject, and most kindly complied with our request. We were kept very busy getting all unfinished work completed that was in our power during the years 1873 and 1874. In the beginning of 1874 Mr Lyon came down to give me a hand, as we found Mr Wood was going to be rather troublesome about the renewal of the lease of the mill. Mr Lyon

was taken very ill with low fever, and unfit for much business, and when he left we never expected to see him again. He soon recovered, and was able to return again in July. Meanwhile, we had decided that we required more accommodation in the house, and immediately commenced the addition, including dining-room and bathroom downstairs, with the two rooms above them - bedroom and bathroom. The site was marked off and the foundations started to be dug on the 9th of March, 1874, which turned out to be the day the Duke of Edinburgh was making his formal visit to the City of London with his bride, the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, another link of connection between events of interest in his history and your father's. The building was not so satisfactory as I had wished it to be; the wood was not well seasoned, and the workmanship rough. I had other duties to attend to, and left it in Mr Marley's (the architect) hands. To my horror, one day the tradesmen came to me to say they could only carry the stair halfway up, because of the floor of the room above. Space for the stair had not been reserved, so there was nothing for it but to cut a gap in the floor above for head-room, which was afterwards covered over with that table, contrivance in the bathroom. It has always been a most awkward staircase, and all for want to a few feet more of ground space to begin with. I mention this as a hint to any one of you wishing to build some day. A few feet of ground space adds little more to the cost, but much to the comfort. The tradesmen were to have finished in May, but did not complete their work till the middle of June - just a week before Uncle Deans arrived. Of course, the plaster was too damp to occupy these new rooms then, and we had to be content with the old. On Homebush Uncle James

was getting on as fast as possible with the tunnel giving access to the coal, which we could not reach otherwise at that time, hence the name of Glentunnel. The hole was through a day or so before your father came of age, and a courier was despatched to us with the information. Old Mr Williams, of the coal depot in Christchurch, and Tom Brown, manager of the mines at Glentunnel, did all, or nearly all, the work themselves, with Uncle James directing by Mr Bray's plans.

About the middle of July Mr Lyon arrived again, and, after a general inspection of affairs by the trustees, it was thought proper by them that your father should have a semi-public demonstration given him on coming of age, in respect of the very prominent position held by his father and uncle, on the arrival of the "First Four" ships with their living freights - the Canterbury Pilgrims. Accordingly, Mr Morton, of Langham Hotel, was asked to prepare luncheon for about two hundred guests, to erect a marquee on the lawn for the reception of the guests, to provide as many waiters as required, with all the other etceteras of table linen, glasses, and crockery. There were only ten days to do it in, but it was splendidly done for those days, when gatherings of that sort were less common. The marquee was from the dining-room window across the lawn, to where the old wattle trees grew, and the table was in the form of a double L lengthways, with a small one in the centre to hold more people, as they responded more heartily to the invitations than we had supposed they would, considering that we had three days' drenching rain from Sunday morning till Tuesday afternoon. The ground was very wet, but Wednesday turned out beautifully fine, with wind which dried up the ground quickly, and the men worked with a will

to get the marquee finished and tables erected, and a few decorations to be ready for Mr Morton and his staff of assistants early next morning (6th August, 1874), as the luncheon was to be about half-past one. It turned out a most beautiful day - calm and bright and warm. The guests arrived most punctually, and such a shaking of hands. It gave me an idea of what a Governor's lady has to perform when holding a levee. There were flags across the road at the hotel, one was flying over the old barn, and we had several in the marquee. Tall cabbage trees were planted on each side of the drive gate; everything and everybody made quite a gala day of it. The repast was "sumptuous". All the delicacies that could be thought of - boned and stuffed turkey to grace the head of the table, and others down the sides. A splendidly dressed boar's head at each end, where Mr Lyon and Mr Duncan acted as vice-chairmen. Mr Deans took the head of the table, with your father on his right, and I on his left. Mr Fraser said grace, and Archdeacon Wilson returned thanks (Mr Bowen being rather late to be asked to do so). There was a large birthday cake at the head of the table, of which everyone partook. The wines were provided by ourselves. All your grandfather's old friends were invited that we could remember, and all ranks of the people, including press reporters, and the speeches were very well reported in the papers of the following or next day. About fifty remained for a dance in the evening, to warm up the new dining-room. Swartz played, and Mr Wilkin and I opened the ball with a Scotch reel. Old Mr McFarlane accompanied the piano with the violin. Mr Morton left a waiter to lay supper in the parlour from the remains of the lunch. Next day the same process was gone through with about sixty of the old

servants and their families, including the evening dance and supper and speechifying. Your father then took the head of the table. We had a full house for three nights. I don't remember whether some must have slept "three in a bed" or on the floors. There was not a bed for each. To finish up, the Maoris had a feast on the following Thursday. That was prepared at home and served under the trees in the plantation. The ground was dry, and a pleasant nor'-west wind made it delightful. Lots of speeches expressing friendship with the family, etc., were made. They all sat round in a circle, and as each was helped he put down his plate till all were served. Then they sang a hymn and said grace most reverently. The scraps were put in sacks for them to take home.

When the coming-of-age festivities came to a close we had to settle down to our old, everyday life, with this difference: that your father then head of the house instead of me. It is of no use trying to describe feeling of thankfulness I felt to my Heavenly Father for His great kin to us both, in times of joy and sorrow, for we had both, and for bring us to such a happy consummation of such a long trusteeship, and giving us health and strength for the duties required. Also, for protecting guiding your dear father through the helpless years of infancy, the "slippery paths of youth", and at last to man's estate, so that "no evil befell him, nor plague came near him". Also for providing me with kind and considerate co-trustees to help me in directing affairs, and with kind fellow-workers in Mr D. Graham and Uncle James and others in carrying out the wishes of your grandfather in the management of the estate. For what was I, to undertake such a responsibility? Had I not put my trust in Him, Who

never fails any who truly love Him? To Him alone be all the glory and all the praise. I mentioned that we had both joys and sorrows in those long twenty years. I have mentioned several of the joys and the sorrows or worldly troubles or fights to maintain our rights. These are perhaps better forgotten, only I think it tight you should know some of them, so that you may more fully appreciate the value of your father's inheritance here, and the other at Homebush, so if I am spared I will give you an outline of the principal ones. After your grandfather's death, the first I remember was being asked to allow the storm water from the Riccarton Road to be let through the hedge into the creek beyond the railway gates. This I refused to do, as the creek was an overflow from the river, and flowed towards the south instead of north. The Superintendent threatened to "indict me for nuisance" for refusing. I went to the judge (Mr Gresson) about it. He seemed against me. I told him if he sent an armed force to open it I would have another there to defend it. When I came home I wrote down the history of the fight your grandfather and his brother had had over it previously and sent it to Mr Brittan, my co-trustee, who brought them to reason, and they left me alone. A few years after, when repairs were being done to the road, the levels were taken, and my statement as to the flow of the water was found to be correct. Another trouble was awaiting me about the fence which was found to be seven feet farther out on the road than it should have been. This I was able to explain satisfactorily, otherwise orders were about to be given to cut it down. While the Surveyors were instructed to lay off this reserve of Riccarton fully two years before the arrival of the "first four ships", they were told to give

good measure, as there was plenty of land on the Plains. They therefore gave a "link" to every chain, continuing the same liberal measure to many others afterwards, thus causing no end of confusion to later surveyors. This explanation saved the hedge, which was the admiration of all who saw it, and was about eight or nine years old, and planted by your grandfather's and his brother William's own hands. Near the end of the Bush the line was not straight. I should have said the thorns were planted right on the top of the Surveyor's line, and had to be protected by post and rail fence on both sides for years. There was no other property surveyed, so they encroached on no other. The line was surveyed partly from the east and partly from the west, and having to cut through a little bit of the Bush which extended over part of Gregg's land, the lines did not meet, but overlapped. You will see it on the old map quite distinctly still. There was another fight to retain the outlet to the Fendalton Road by the Road Board Office. Mr Russell, of Ilam, gave the straight road on condition of getting the one round the river in exchange. We succeeded in retaining the outlet. What annoyed me exceedingly was the mean advantage taken of us by the Riccarton Road Board. The reins of our trusteeship had scarcely passed from our hands into your father's when, to our amazement, without the courtesy of notice, men were set to plough down the natural footpath and bank along the hedge from the entrance of the lane to the hotel, cutting right into the roots of the thorns, which we thought would be sure to kill them outright, I have no doubt that was meant, but by filling in the ditch on the north side the plants got fresh root, and they have lived. The excuse made for doing this was that the road was too narrow, and the

hedge encroached on it. That was not the case, as the hedge was planted exactly on the Surveyor's line, and in laying off the road, which was done long after, allowance of eighteen inches ought to have been made for the width of the hedge. I am minute in this, as I have had so many fights over it. You will notice that the centre part of the boundary fence is quite within the eighteen inches off the road, as that part was not fenced till the road was made.

The law suits with Mr H. B. Johnstone about Mr Wood's mill dam were serious troubles, by which we had more than enough of vexation, and all the more as he had till then been most friendly with all of us. It all arose from the omission in the agreement that we had paid for diverting the water from the dam to the mill wheel, though he accepted payment for all damages sustained by him, and was shown where the water was to be taken from, to which he perfectly agreed. But such is law. We lost the three cases, which he gained, but he left the district soon after. The arrangements with the Government about the Northern Railway passing through the property; and getting a siding from them to the mill, with the station house, were also rather troublesome pieces of business, but on the whole were satisfactory; not so the arrangement with Mr Wood and Mr Johnstone about keeping the dam clear of cress and planting a stone pillar of memorial of the agreement to keep the river clear from the dam to that pillar. These are specimens of the troubles I had to contend with, so that you will see the value (beyond the money value) which I attach to this place. So many people were envious of our prosperity, and covetous of the pretty place, and annoyed because they had not been able to drive your grandfather and his brother from it, not wishing to have any but Church of England people

here. On Homebush the troubles were also legion, but your Uncle James did the most of the personal fighting there for me. Between Mr Jebson, at Sheffield, and Mr Sheath, at Surveyor's Gully (Glentunnel), the battle raged pretty hot at times, though in the end it usually came right. The Church Property Trustees had taken up two sections of 250 acres each on the run when your grandfather was at Home. About the year 1865 or 1866 they wished either to start a dairy farm on the one at the mouth of the swamp behind Homebush, or sell both. The dairy would have been a great annoyance then in the middle of our cattle run, and no fences, so we offered to buy it. They would not sell the one unless we took both, and at a stiff price, but on making calculations of expenses and annoyances we decided to take both, paying by instalments.

We were forced to take out pre-emptive rights to protect fencing, etc., and then would again be forced to buy them through Mr Jetson's manoeuvres, threatening one thing after another, causing us much inconvenience in money matters. However, it is now all freehold, and the difficulty will be to retain it with the taxes that are being proposed at present.

I think I forgot to relate an adventure at the Heathcote Ferry that I promised. It happened in the autumn of 1859. Uncle James required to go to port and Governor's Bay on business, and it being a lovely morning, your father and I went with him as far as Casterton to spend the day with Mrs Waitt. A sudden change occurred in the weather, a heavy southwester and thunderstorm, which prevented your uncle getting back to Casterton till almost dusk. When we reached the ferry we could scarcely see across, and had difficulty in calling the ferryman's attention, what with the noise of the

storm and the squealing of a pig that was being caught. However, at last he did come, but before we left the bank another carriage with two horses came up behind us, and the man, to save a return trip, took both on. The tide was full, and the waves lashed the punt and frightened all the horses. The ferryman lost his presence of mind and stood still. Uncle James stood by our horse's head, holding him; Mrs Graham (who was with us) jumped out at the one side and I did the same at the other, with your father in my arms. The horses behind began to run back, and one of the gentlemen in that carriage jumped over the rails into a little boat fastened to the punt. I commanded him to take your father over too, and I soon followed, for I thought every minute we would either be crushed with the wheels or trampled with the horses. At length the ferryman got his chain round the wheel of our dogcart, which helped Uncle James to hold on, but the terror we were all in I cannot describe. There was no protection either before or behind for horses. Another adventure was coming from Mount Grey. Mrs O'Connell sent her manager with us to make sure the Ashley was fordable. He rode through and returned to pilot Mr Graham with the dogcart. Mrs Graham, your father and I were to walk by the suspension bridge a few chains higher up. The river was coming down brown and hissing. The wind was a howling nor'west, and it was all we could do to get along with our arms over the one railing and your father, with his eyes shut, holding my hands. A fortnight after, the bridge was carried away. You must be tired of all these grumbles, so I must give you something pleasanter to make up for it, and let these be the backgrounds of the otherwise happy, contented, and pleasant, though lonely, life I have

spent here, in the enjoyment of reclaiming the wilderness, and the society of many dear, kind friends. I must try and give you an idea of some of the natural wild beauties of these Plains, as that was one of the objects I had in view in commencing these letters to you. To begin with, there were these vast Plains in their original state, I may say, for they showed no sign of ever having been cultivated. Some places dry tussock grass, waving like a sea in the breeze; in other places, rough tu-tu and wild Irishmen and Spaniards; others, again, bush or sandhills, or swamps with lagoons and tall flax and toi-tois, which looked very pretty. I should have included the cabbage trees. All was waiting the advent of a white race of people to reclaim them and make them useful or beautiful as a garden. Then the "Great Fence", mountain wall, shutting us off from the west coast. Its grandeur and ever-changing beauties were beyond description. The appearance of light and shade in the mornings and evenings were as changeable as the sea, and the colouring so beautiful.

In nor'-west weather they are apparently so near, and you can distinctly see the green of the different little bushes up the gorges of rivers or in the smaller gullies. When snow-clad the hills are massive and grand, and even in the whiteness there is the play of light and shade as a little cloud passes over them. At sunrise in frosty weather, the pink colouring is lovely, and at sunset the blue and purple haze between you and the mountains, while along the summits after sunset there would be a radiance like a glory resting and shining all along the sharp outlines. One of the most beautiful sights I ever beheld was late in the afternoon on the 6th of August, 1871. I had been in port seeing a friend on

board a steamer, and was returning home. On emerging from the mouth of the tunnel the Plains seemed all under the shadow of a heavy nor'-west cloud, while far away to the north, along the mountains from Tekoa to the Kaikouras, the sun was shining so calmly and peacefully before the storm. Whether it was distance that "lent enchantment to the view" or not I cannot tell, but the reflection of the sun's rays on the mountain tussock grass was so resplendent, so like what you could imagine the "sea of glass" to be - a radiance, a glory indescribable. The thought it called forth was: "If on earth it can be so beautiful, what must Heaven be?" It has been a never-fading glory in my memory. The mirages were most remarkable and beautiful, reflecting the trees, buildings, and sometimes ships in the apparent cloud, all upside down, not to mention the white fogs in April and May creeping low down with objects a few feet high standing out like islands or boats in a sea of milk, Cultivation seems to have destroyed or shut off these lovely sights of Nature on the earth, but there are still the Heavenly sights that you can see for yourselves - eclipses of sun, moon, or stars, a starlight night, the gorgeous sunsets with the varying cloud forms and brilliant colouring.

One of the grandest, most awe-inspiring sights I ever saw was coming from town one October evening in 1858, about 9 p.m. The black nor'-west clouds were hanging heavily over the mountains, though bright and clear above, with frequent flashes of sheet lightning, when every now and again (about five minutes, say) those great black clouds would seem to open as if you put your two wrists together with your hands closed, and without separating your wrists. Open and shut your hands quickly and

imagine every time you did so a flash of lightning issued from them, spread the whole length of the then visible mountain range (from Mount Grey to Mount Peel), and reaching to the zenith like an enormous fan of fire, the flashes being double or treble almost every time. It impressed my brother George and myself most deeply with the majesty and power and glory of the Most High, and our own insignificance.

One most beautiful sight was a lunar halo rainbow-hued. We sat on the verandah watching it for an hour, and so lovely and rare was it I tried to fix it on canvas in wool as near as possible comparing small things with great. Another fine sight was a very perfect lunar rainbow one night returning from a party - and in the earlier days people at parties never left till the first streak of dawn - and, oh! the fresh, grand, lovely beauties of the approaching sunrise, and the songs of the birds on nearing home. Very many of the "native songsters of the grove have disappeared before the imported ones. You will be able to glean from what I have written how much of the bright and beautiful has filled my life here to compensate for the loneliness, humanly speaking, after your grandfather's death, so that I can truly say: "With mercy and with judgment, my web of time He wove, and aye the dews of sorrow were lusted by His love."

End